

# WOMEN OF COLONIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY TIMES



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# WOMEN OF COLONIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY TIMES



UNDER this general title Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons are publishing a series of six volumes, the aim of which is not only to present carefully studied portraits of the most distinguished women of Colonial and Revolutionary times, but to offer as a background for these portraits pictures of the domestic and social, instead of the political and other public, life of the people in successive periods of national development.

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The volumes are: "Eliza Pinckney", "Martha Washington", "Dolly Madison", "Margaret Winthrop", "Catherine Schuyler" and "Mercy Warren."



*WOMEN OF COLONIAL AND  
REVOLUTIONARY TIMES* ~~~

*DOLLY MADISON*  
*BY MAUD (WILDER) GOODWIN*



*WITH PORTRAIT*



*CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS*  
*NEW YORK*

*MCCCC*

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TO

*HILDA HAWTHORNE GOODWIN.*



## PREFACE

*Thackeray, in the beginning of his lectures on the Four Georges, makes loving mention of a charming lady of the old school, whose life extended far back into the last century. "I often thought," he says, "as I took my kind old friend's hand, how with it I held on to the old society of wits and men of the world."*

*Even such a link with the past, to those of us at least who have reached middle age, is Mrs. Madison. This life of hers which almost or quite touched ours, touched also the lives of Alexander Hamilton and Aaron Burr, of Decatur and Somers and Paul Jones, of Talleyrand and Lafayette and Jefferson, while she was "dear Dolly," to the spouse of Washington himself. Her life was so deeply influenced by its environment, and its significance depended so largely upon the people and events with which it was connected, that I feel that no apology is necessary for the effort I have made to present in this volume less a formal biography than a sketch of the social and domestic life of the epoch as it affected Dolly Madison.*

## PREFACE

*The authorities (outside of unpublished letters and contemporary newspapers) upon which I have relied are as follows: For the general history of the United States, the volumes of Winsor, Adams and McMaster. For local history and tradition, the standard histories of Virginia, Meade's Old Churches and Families of Virginia, the biographies of Virginia Statesmen and the Journal of a Young Lady of Virginia. For the picture of Philadelphia life, The Friends' Monthly Meeting Records, Watson's Annals of Philadelphia, Graydon's Memoirs, Quakers in Pennsylvania (one of the Johns Hopkins studies), the privately printed Journal of Elizabeth Drinker, the sketches of travel left by Robin, Chastellux, de Liancourt, Timothy Twining and Wansey, and the letters of Fisher Ames and Jeremiah Smith; for personal details in the life of Mr. and Mrs. Madison, the Madison Papers, both published and unpublished, in the State Department at Washington, A Colored Man's Reminiscences of James Madison, the Life and Times of Madison (Rives), The Life of James Madison (Gay), Letters and other Writings of James Madison, and Selected Extracts from his Correspondence, edited by McGuire; The Letters of Mrs. Madison published with a Memoir by her grand-niece; the letters of Joel Barlow, Thomas Jefferson, John and Abigail*

## PREFACE

*Adams, John Randolph, James Monroe, W. W. Sullivan, the Seatons, and Aaron Burr; the Retrospect of Western Travel, by Harriet Martineau, and the Polk Diary (unpublished) which by the courtesy of the Lenox Library, I have been enabled to see. Brief sketches of Mrs. Madison, yielding much entertaining gossip, I have found in the papers of the National Portrait Gallery; The Court Circles of the Republic, Queens of American Society; Our Early Presidents, their Wives and Families; Worthy Women of the Last Century; Ladies of the White House, and Homes of American Statesmen.*

*My thanks for assistance are particularly due to Mr. Ainsworth R. Spofford, Mr. Frederick D. Stone, Mr. Adrian H. Joline, Mr. James L. Pennypacker, Mr. Paul L. Ford, Mr. Charles Collins, Miss Emily V. Mason, Mrs. Adele Cutts Williams, Mr. Henry D. Biddle, and Mr. Detrick of Montpelier.*



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DOLLY MADISON



# DOLLY MADISON

## I

### CHILDHOOD

“The swallows must have twittered too  
Above her head; the roses blew  
Below, no doubt; and sure the South  
Crept up the wall and kissed her mouth, —  
That wistful mouth which comes to me  
Linked with her name of Dorothy.”

It would have been a bold soothsayer who had ventured to predict a brilliant social and worldly career for the little maiden who in Revolutionary days went tripping along the forest paths, under the shadow of Virginia pines, to the old field-school in Hanover County, where Dolly Payne learned her A B C's.

In truth, no one could have looked less frivolous than this demure school-girl, with the sober gown reaching to the toes of her shoes, the long gloves covering her dimpled elbows, and the linen mask and broad-brimmed sun-bonnet, hiding her rosy face. Yet an eye trained to fortune-telling might perchance have caught a glimpse of a glittering chain about the white

neck under the close-pinned kerchief, and guessed the guilty secret of hidden finery which it held, and which gave the lie to the profession of a renounced vanity which her garb suggested.

If any one was responsible for Dolly Payne's lapse from the severe simplicity of the sect of Friends in after years, it must have been the worldly-minded grandmother who, in this early time, supplied the bits of jewelry worn thus under the rose of Dolly's blushes.

The sins of vanity and secretiveness met with the retribution which such wickedness merited, and on one of these fine summer days, after a woodland wandering, the chain and bag and finery were all missing, and the guilty little heart was ready to burst with grief over the loss of its treasures. There was one person at least to whom the culprit could carry the story of her affliction, — one with ear always open and heart always full of sympathy for the child who, as a baby, had been laid in her arms and hushed on her faithful black breast. This was "Mother Amy," a typical southern "mammy," whose turbaned head had nodded many a night from dusk till dawn over little Dolly's cradle while her soft negro-voice crooned lullabies. But that was in the days of Dolly's babyhood; years before she grew into a school-girl, indif-

ferent to books and fond of dress, as she continued to be, in her simple, natural fashion to the end of life.

His Majesty, King George III., still ruled in America when little Dorothy Payne was born, and it was in His Majesty's Province of North Carolina that her blue baby eyes unclosed like spring violets, on the twentieth of May in the year 1768.<sup>1</sup>

The child was named Dorothea in honor of Dorothea Spotswood Dandridge, daughter of Nathaniel West Dandridge, and grand-daughter of the long remembered Governor Alexander Spotswood. Nine years after the birth of her little namesake, this lady became the wife of the famous orator Patrick Henry, and later of Judge Edmund Winston, both cousins of Dolly Payne's mother. By her marriage with Patrick Henry she added nine children of her own to the six left him by his first wife.

Large families were the fashion in old Colony days, and by every hearth-stone, of rich and poor alike, played little children in numbers which our degenerate age would reckon intolerably burdensome. Dolly Payne's future

<sup>1</sup> I have accepted this date which is given upon her tombstone, in preference to the one more generally received, of 1772, for many reasons; chiefly because Mrs. Madison was universally spoken of among her contemporaries as over eighty at the time of her death which occurred in 1849.

husband, James Madison, was the oldest of many brothers and sisters, and Dolly, herself the eldest daughter, was followed by a train of younger children to whom, in after years, she showed herself a most affectionate and devoted sister, as their mutual letters amply prove.

Although the chances of a parental visit placed her birth in North Carolina, Dolly Payne had good right to call herself a child of that Virginia which she loved so well. A Virginian she was both by lineage and residence. Her grandfather, John Payne, was an English gentleman of wealth and liberal culture, who came over to Virginia and planted himself in the county of Goochland, which lies along the northern shore of the James River above Richmond. He took to wife Anna Fleming. This Colonial dame is alleged to have been a descendant of the Earl of Wigton, a Scotch nobleman; but this is disputed, and as Virginians of that day were wont to trace their ancestry to the aristocracy of Great Britain as naively as the Roman emperors derived theirs from the gods, this genealogy must be taken with a grain of salt by sober students of history. Of Scottish descent, however, Mistress Fleming undoubtedly was. Her son, John Payne, junior, the father of Dorothy, migrated in his turn to a plantation in North Carolina where he met,



courted, and married Mary, daughter of William Coles, who came from Enniscorthy, a town on the banks of the river Slaney, in County Wexford, Ireland.

Thus the three kingdoms blended their diverse strains of blood in the little maiden who slipped into life in the Colony of North Carolina on that May day in the latter part of the last century, and traces of each showed themselves in her character, as it developed. If any one of these strains predominated, it was that, I should say, which came to her through Mary Coles, to which she owed her laughing Irish eyes, her heavy eyebrows and long lashes, her black curling hair, the brilliancy of her skin, and perchance, the smoothness of her tongue, which, despite its tutoring in the plain "thee" and "thou" of Quaker speech, and the strictness of Quaker truth-telling, always suggested in its softness an ancestry not unacquainted with the groves and the magic stone of Blarney.

Shortly after his marriage with Mary Coles, whom he had wooed and won in the teeth of many rivals, John Payne the younger returned to Virginia and settled upon an estate in Hanover County, which lies north of the James River to the eastward of Goochland where his father's home was situated, and at no great

distance from Coles Hill, the maiden home of his bride. Here, in a mansion somewhat grander than its neighbors, as we may judge from Mrs. Madison's memories of it, with its brick outbuildings and its monumental mantels of marble, John Payne lived during the childhood of his oldest daughter. On this Hanover County plantation, with no large town nearer than Richmond, the little Dorothy, far from the world and its distractions, passed the days of her early youth in that close companionship with nature which makes the surest foundation for a happy life, as she herself recognized when, after the lapse of half a century, she wrote to her sister Anna, from her estate at Montpelier, "I wish, dearest, you had just such a country home as this. I truly believe it is the happiest and most true life, and would be best for you and for your children."

It is difficult for us, who live in the age of steam and electricity, when the round world is circled by iron rails and telegraph wires, to bring vividly before our minds the isolation of such an estate as that of the Paynes in Colonial Virginia. Even down to the time of the Revolution, roads in the southern colonies were few and rudely made, and the rivers continued to be the principal highways. Autumn rains and winter winds made travel an affair of difficulty and

danger, and the inhabitants of the plantation were shut in for weeks together to the society of a small circle of whites and a retinue of black servants, whose quarters were often merrier than the halls of the mansion-house.

The only relief from the monotony was the coming of a visitor from the outside world; and when the packet "tied up" to the wharf at the foot of the tobacco-field, or the solitary rider lifted the latch of the five-barred gate with the handle of his riding-whip, there was much joyous excitement within the household,—negro servants hastily donned their new jackets, turbans and fresh aprons were brought out, and a smiling train waited on the steps behind the hospitable master and mistress to do honor to the coming guest. The welcome extended to him was as sincere as it was hearty, and he could scarcely make too long a stay for the pleasure of his host. The best the house contained was at his service, and every energy was exerted for his entertainment. The amusements of those old country-houses, as a rule, were of a very primitive and simple nature, but they had one great advantage which ours often lack, they did amuse.

I hold in my hand the journal of a young lady of Virginia who jotted down her daily doings and experiences during a series of visits which

she paid to hospitable homesteads in the Old Dominion, in the year 1784, when she, like Dorothy Payne, was some sixteen summers old. It is full of mirth and running over with laughter and jollity, — and all over what? — A performance on the “Forte-pianer”; a moonlight walk; the selecting of sweethearts by thistle-blowing; a dance of half a dozen couples; a ride on horseback to a neighboring estate.

“I must tell you,” she writes on one occasion, “of our frolic after we went in our room. We took it into our heads to want to eat: well, we had a large dish of bacon and beaf” (you see the Virginia maid of olden time was not strong in spelling), “after that a bowl of sago-cream, and after that an apple-pye in bed.” As though that were not enough! But no: “After this we took it in our heads to eat oysters. We got up, put on our rappers and went down in the seller to get them. Do you think Mr. Washington did not follow us and scear us just to death! We went up tho’ and eat our oysters.”

With such merry-making country life might prove gay enough for the most frivolous and worldly minded young person; but it was a different matter at the plantation of John Payne, who held the tenets of the Society of Friends in their strictest sense, and discour-

tenanced as firmly as any Puritan all worldly amusements. Yet despite the dearth of excitements his daughter Dolly found the entertainments of the old plantation quite satisfying to her simple tastes, and in after life she loved to dwell on these early days and declared them full of happiness.

The training of the house-servants, the care of the sick, the superintendence of the cooking and endless needle-work made up the serious occupation of the Colonial dame in Virginia, and Dolly Payne as the eldest daughter of the family was early instructed in all these gentle arts of housewifery. Her mental training was amply provided for according to the standards of the time by an education covering the acquirements of reading, writing, and an uncertain quantity of arithmetic. Writing at least was thoroughly taught, for her autograph letters show a smooth, flowing hand, almost too clear and self-committing, for, if the truth must be told, our Dolly might well have imitated the indistinct chirography of the youth who said he did not dare to write well, lest folk should find out how he spelled. To the end of her life she continued to violate the canons laid down by Noah Webster and Lindley Murray. Uncle she spelled with a "k". Her weather was "propicious." She corresponded

with her dressmaker about new "cloaths," and she wrote tenderly of a friend who was suffering "with a bile on her arm."

Let not the lip of the nineteenth-century college-bred woman curl in scorn over these little lapses, which must be set down to the charge of the age rather than of the individual. The standard of female education when Dolly Payne was a girl, had at least the merit of being quite comprehensible and comparatively easy of attainment. Two questions only were to be answered: First, what would make her most sought as a wife? Second, what would make her the best help-meet, wife, and mother? From beginning to end, her intellectual development was regarded from the point of view of its pleasingness or usefulness to man.

"In all nations," writes Noah Webster at this epoch, "a good education is that which renders the ladies correct in their manners, respectable in their families, and agreeable in society." Some knowledge of arithmetic, as well as the rudiments of geography, he considers desirable. "Belles-lettres learning seems to correspond with the dispositions of most females," he says, "and a taste for reading and especially writing poetry should be cultivated as a vent for superfluous emotion." He urges that accomplishments, such as music and



dancing, be strictly subordinated, and adds convincingly: "My fair friends will pardon me when I declare that no man ever marries a woman for her performance on a harpsichord or her figure in a minuet."

As to education, the gentlemen themselves had none too much to boast of, especially among these descendants of the Cavaliers, whose schools were their saddles. John Randolph, who was a contemporary of Dolly Madison, declared in after life that the first map he ever saw was one of Virginia, of which he obtained a glimpse when he was nearly fifteen, and that he never until the age of manhood possessed any treatise on geography other than an obsolete gazetteer. "I never was with any preceptor, one only excepted," he said, "who would deserve to be called a Latin or Greek scholar, and I never had any master of modern languages, but an old Frenchman (some gentleman's valet, I suppose) who could neither write nor spell."

When John Randolph and Dolly Payne were children the thoughts of all their elders were so absorbed in pressing questions of great moment that comparatively little time or attention was bestowed on education. Every young girl was occupied in making clothing for soldiers, and every lad big enough to

carry a musket had shut up his school-books and shouldered his gun. So it was in Hanover County over which Tarleton rode with his raiders. Whilst little Dorothy was learning her book and strolling through green fields and sun-dappled woodland paths, playing with her little sisters on the bank of the stream, or mourning in secret with her head on Mother Amy's breast for the loss of her bits of finery, great matters were stirring in the outside world beyond the gates of the plantation: John Payne, forgetful of his Quaker peace principles, or believing them overruled by the necessity of his country, had buckled on his sword and ridden away to become a captain in the Continental Army. Patrick Henry was thundering out his denunciation of British oppression in the Continental Congress; and James Madison, destined in the dim future years to be bound by such close ties to the little Hanover County maid, was making his entrance into public life, first, as a member of the Virginia Committee of Safety, and later, as a delegate to the Virginia Convention where he played an important part in the drafting of the famous Bill of Rights.

Children as young as Dolly Payne shared the enthusiasm and anxieties of their parents in this great life-and-death struggle. Babies



played by the door-step at drilling; mimic train-bands marched and counter-marched on nursery battle-fields, and when a day of fasting and prayer was set apart in Virginia solemnly to invoke the aid of Almighty God in the great undertaking of the war, George Mason wrote home to a friend: "Tell my dear little family that I desire my three eldest sons and my two eldest daughters may attend church in mourning."

Thus, little children all over the broad land, from Massachusetts to Georgia, were thrilling with the joys and sorrows of the public, and thus, when the Revolution came to an end leaving the States united, it was the good fortune of Dorothy Payne to belong to the first generation of patriots, — of those who grew up with the ideal of a country; with an intense loyalty, not to a province, but to a nation. "British oppression," exclaimed her kinsman, Patrick Henry, "has effaced the boundaries of the several Colonies; the distinctions between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, and New Englanders, are no more. I am not a Virginian, but an *American*."

## II

### A QUAKER GIRLHOOD

It is easy to understand why John Payne, having become a stanch Friend, began to find the clime of his native Virginia uncongenial to his spiritual nature. The Virginia planters, as a rule, were distinctly non-religious, if not irreligious. The supremacy of the Church of England in the southern Colonies had fallen with the fall of England's political power. Church buildings lay in ruins; baptismal fonts had been transformed into watering troughs; the communion chalice was used to hold the morning dram; rust covered the bells which once summoned congregations to praise and prayer, and the parsons had fled away over seas with none to bid them good-speed or to waste a lament over their departure. Yet this downfall of the Established Church had not made dissent popular. The feeling was still prevalent which inspired the remark made to Madison: "A man may be a Christian in any church, but a gentleman must belong to the Church of England."

From the beginning, Quakers especially had been looked upon with an intolerance, strange in view of the peacefulness of the doctrines of the sect. In early Virginia history we find it set down as a crime against a citizen that he had shown himself "very loveing" to Quakers; and again we read of a court of life and death consisting of the Governor of the Province and any three of the sixteen councillors, "whereat are tried Quakers and non-conformists."

All this actual persecution was a thing of the past long before John Payne came to the resolution of quitting Virginia. In 1717 the King repealed the law prohibiting the assemblage of Quakers, and the famous Bill of Rights which Madison helped to frame, distinctly declared that "religion, or the duty we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction: not by force or violence; and, therefore, all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion according to the dictates of conscience."

There is a wide gulf between toleration and sympathy, however, and it was quite natural that John Payne should look longingly to the companionship of his spiritual kindred who dwelt on the banks of the Schuylkill and the Delaware. He desired, moreover, educational advantages for his children greater than the plantation life

of Virginia could afford, and therefore after a preliminary visit, which he and his wife made to Philadelphia, in the spring of 1779, he decided definitely to break the old ties and take up his residence in the North.

His first preparation for the important change which he contemplated, was the setting free of all his blacks, whose condition of slavery had long weighed heavily upon his conscience. Some of these servants, however, refused to accept their liberty, and prayed their master to take them with him to his new home in Philadelphia. Among these was Mother Amy, who was at last accorded the privilege of continuing in the service of the family with the proviso that she should be paid for her labor. The wages thus received she frugally laid away, and at her death bequeathed the sum of five hundred dollars to her mistress.

Having thus, for conscience sake, given up that large share of his property which lay in slaves, John Payne set his household in order for the journey, which to him was more like a pilgrimage, to the "City of Brotherly Love." The distance, set down on the map as some two hundred miles, conveys little notion of what that journey involved of difficulty, discomfort, and even danger. Travel by packet sloop was the most comfortable mode of conveyance, but

slow and tedious. Moreover, these packets plied only between important points, and passage in them was not to be had without much prearrangement and tedious delay.

Yet travel by land was still more difficult and fatiguing. Outside Philadelphia lay black and treacherous quagmires, in which the horses floundered and struggled for hours, making no progress towards getting out, while some of the hills were so steep that wagons must pause till other teams came to their assistance. These wagons had no springs, and the unlucky passengers were jolted from side to side as the wheels of the vehicle rolled over rocks or sank to the hubs in mud. Progress was so slow that days and even weeks were consumed in journeys which can now be accomplished in a few hours.

John Payne, whether he had travelled by packet down the James from Richmond and up the weary length of Chesapeake Bay, or by coach through Alexandria and Baltimore, must have felt that all the hardships of his pilgrimage were rewarded, and that he had reached his Mecca when the roofs and steeples of Philadelphia rose before his view, on the shores of the Schuylkill.

An entry upon which I chanced in an old diary, kept by one of the Paynes' neighbors, enables me to fix exactly the time of this mi-

gration; for under date of July ninth, 1783, Elizabeth Drinker notes among the events of the day: "John Payne's Family came to reside in Philadelphia."

At the time of his northward migration, at the close of the Revolutionary War, Philadelphia was the metropolis of America, a thriving town, with a population of thirty-two thousand inhabitants. Its houses numbered over four thousand, most of which sheltered well-clad, well-fed, well-to-do citizens, "free-livers on a small scale, and prodigal within the compass of a guinea." Small as the city was in comparison with its extent and magnitude to-day, it was even then not destitute of fine buildings and historic spots. Dolly Payne's eyes, unused to city sights, must have opened wide at her first glimpse of Christ Church, with its quaint steeple, and its famous chimes of bells, imported out of England at a cost of nine hundred pounds; at sight of the old Court-House; of Carpenters Hall, and the State-House, where America's independence had its birth. On the banks of the Delaware, at Shackamaxon, near the Governor's house, the Treaty-Elm was still standing to call up before the girl's youthful imagination the vision of William Penn, with his blue silk sash about his waist, surrounded by the Indians, "arranged in form as a half moon."



## A QUAKER GIRLHOOD

Other sights upon which her eyes rested were less beautiful and less elevating in their associations. At the west end of the Market, on Third Street, stood a platform, raised from the ground some eight or ten feet for the benefit of the curious, and in its centre rose two rude instruments of punishment, — the whipping-post and the pillory. Here, on Saturday, which was high market-day, between ten and eleven in the morning, the miserable victims of the law stood with head and arms ignominiously pinioned, or, still worse, with clothes stripped to the waist and backs bleeding from the strokes of the lash, while school-children looked on with eager curiosity as at a spectacle.

Dolly Payne's heart was far too tender to take pleasure in any such scenes of suffering. More to her taste were the strolls along the river side or over the western Commons, or, best of all, on the shady side of Chestnut Street, when the belles and beaux were taking their afternoon promenade. Here the young fashionables congregated in great numbers and always attired as for a dress parade. The men were arrayed in very tight small-clothes and silk stockings, with pointed shoes ornamented with shining buckles. Their waistcoats were often of bright colors, and the outer coats with several little capes were adorned with silver

buttons, from whose size and number the owner's wealth might be guessed. Old men carried gold-headed canes, which, being a badge of gentility, were always very much in evidence.

The women were attired even more gorgeously than the cavaliers who bowed and flourished and scraped before them. Their gowns of brocade were of a prodigious fulness as needs must be when the hoop spreads out like a balloon. The musk-melon and calash bonnets were of correspondingly wide dimensions, and altogether a woman prepared for the promenade resembled a ship under full sail.

Doubt not that Dolly Payne's quick eye took in every clock of the dames' bright colored stockings, as they peeped from beneath the petticoats, and counted the rands in their white shoes, and watched the flashing of their ear-drops, and secretly wished that some of the finery and the gayety might fall to her lot, little dreaming that some day she herself would be the leader of the fashion, and the arbiter of the gay world. Now it all seemed very far off to the little unknown Quaker maiden, who had been taught that sober apparel was part of religion.

Simplicity of dress was earnestly and constantly urged upon all the attendants at meet-



ing, but human nature is not to be regulated by creed or formula, and, in spite of all the prayers and exhortations of the Friends, their women-folk continued to love fine apparel, yes, and to buy and wear it too, under the very shadow of the broad brims which shook with disapprobation. Men as well as women sometimes donned gay apparel, but they were much condemned, and the limpness of their principles won them the appellation of "Wet Quakers."

The dwellings of the Friends, like their dress, sometimes lapsed into the vanity of adornment, but as a rule they were simple and substantial without and within. They stood in rows and were all of the same pattern. Each had its little porch in front where in warm weather the family was wont to sit of an evening, and where much of the social intercourse of the neighborhood was carried on. The maidens dressed in their best seated themselves here in bright afternoons, and the young men declared it quite an ordeal to pass up and down the street under fire of their glances.

The interiors of the houses were as monotonous as the exteriors. The lower floor had two rooms. The front one was the shop or office, according to the calling of the owner. The room at the back of this, with white-washed walls and sanded floor, was the fam-

ily living room, and the placid pleasures enjoyed there quite justified Montaigne's observation, that one is never so well off as in the back shop. Here the father, mother, and children gathered at meals, and the chance guest who dropped in to take "pot luck" with the family, was welcomed to an easy chair by the open fire, or the Franklin stove lately come into use ; but, on the occurrence of that awful solemnity, known as a tea-party, to which the neighbors were bidden by special invitation, the company met in the frigid upper room, on the second story, where in all the gorgeousness of rustling petticoats and fluttering ribbons, the feminine guests gathered about the slender-legged tea-tables, and partook daintily, with extended little finger, of the crisp rusks and the fragrant tea sipped from egg-shell china. Straight-backed were these dames as the chairs wherein they sat ; and, indeed, the luxuriousness of seats was a matter of trifling consequence, since it was a point of decorum never to lean back or seek any support for the spine or the shoulders. In every portrait of Mrs. Madison and her contemporaries, I note a stateliness of carriage, unfamiliar in our generation, and due doubtless to that early training.

When Dolly Payne was young, Philadelphia society was divided into three different classes ;

first, the old English families, such as the Chews and Conynghams, the Hamiltons and Willings; then those who constituted the Revolutionary aristocracy, including the Butlers, Boudinots, Mifflins, and McKears (one of whom, the lively Sally, became an intimate friend of Dolly and her sisters), and last, but by no means least, that solid Quaker element, led by the Morrises, Logans, Shippens, Lloyds, and Pembertons, with whom the family of John Payne naturally found their affiliations.

Prominent among them were the Drinkers, who were bound to the Paynes by many ties of early association, for Elizabeth Drinker's father, like the father of Mary Payne, was a native of County Wexford, in "The Old Country," and "Molly Payne," when preparing for the move to Philadelphia, had lodged at Mrs. Drinker's hospitable house on the corner of Front Street and Drinker's Alley. The Payne children were at once adopted into the circle of the Drinker young people, and were included in the various driving and sailing expeditions which made up the sum of gayeties deemed appropriate for Quaker boys and girls.

On July tenth, 1784, Elizabeth Drinker relates in her journal, "Sally Drinker and Walter Payne, Billey Sansom and Polly Wells, Jacob Downing and Dolly Payne, went to our Place

at Frankford. Sally and Josey Sansom and Nancy Drinker (from 'Par La Ville') met them there — *a squabble!* Nancy returned home in y<sup>e</sup> evening, with her sister."

One is inclined to suspect from the manner in which the young people are paired off, that the cause of the "squabble" may have been a bit of jealousy on Miss Nancy's part, of the attentions of Jacob Downing to Dolly Payne. If so, her feelings were pacified, for shortly after, Sally Drinker with John and Hannah Thomas set off under the charge of Henry Drinker, senior, for "Rawway," in a "coachee," followed by "J. Downing and Nancy in his chaise." But woe to Nancy if her hopes were raised by this, for on October nineteenth I read, "Fourth Day evening — J. Downing spoke to H. D. [Elizabeth's husband] on account of *Sally!*"

Some of the gayest and most delightful hours of Dolly Payne's social life were those which she passed outside the town of Philadelphia, in the long visits paid to relatives living in the neighboring village of Haddonfield, New Jersey, situated a few miles from Camden, and reached by a horse-ferry from Philadelphia. The house where she visited is still standing on the old "King's Highway," and is rendered notable by having been the meeting place of the State Legislature and afterward of the Council of

Safety. This tavern, for such it was, passed after the Revolution into the hands of Hugh Creighton, and it was to him and his family that Dolly Payne paid her visits, which often lasted for weeks at a time. The Haddonfield young people counted her a great addition to their numbers, and no one of them entered more heartily into the enjoyment of summer picnics and winter sleigh-rides and quilting parties. During these visits she won many friends and lovers among the country beaux, who in their old age were wont to tell of her incomparable charms to the younger generation, and she in turn never forgot these acquaintances of her youth and in her days of power lent a helping hand to many a political aspirant, whose chief claim upon her kindness lay in his association with Haddonfield and "auld lang syne."

For the first year or two after the removal from Virginia to Philadelphia, all went well with the Paynes. The character and eloquence of John Payne won for him a high standing, and he soon became a lay preacher or "Public Friend." On First Day, he exhorted within the walls of the meeting-house. There was neither pulpit nor choir in this bare and simple house of worship, but in front of the benches ran a long platform, and on this when the spirit moved, the exhorter stood, first having removed

the hat, worn, save for prayer and preaching, throughout the meeting. Both men and women were accustomed to exhort; men occupying the section of the platform facing the men's side, and women standing before those of their own sex. A sweet-faced Quakeress, being asked by a scoffer how she explained the Pauline texts forbidding women to exhort in public, replied, with a gentle smile: "Oh, well, Friend, thee knows Paul was never partial to women."

Very eloquent some of these preachers, both male and female, were. Dolly Payne used to declare in later life that the best sermons to which she had ever listened were those of Friend Samuel Wetherill, who was equally well known in meeting and in market-place, his business reputation being spotless, and the brand upon his goods — an old Quaker lady sitting by a spinning-wheel — being recognized everywhere as a standard mark recommending all jeans, fustians, everlastings, and "coatyngs," which bore it. On First Days, when the Paynes and Todds went to hear him, he preached in the Free Quaker Meeting-House, which is still standing at the southwest corner of Fifth and Mulberry Street, the building now occupied by the Apprentices' Free Library.

Among the few dissipations of the youthful Friends was attendance at the Bank-Hill even-



ing meeting, coveted, it is to be feared, not so much for the benefits of its pious exhortations as for the opportunity it offered for subsequent words and glances between the youths and maidens ; but the elders, more strict than the Puritans themselves, discontinued the services “because of the lines of idle young men who waited about the doors to see the young women pass out.”

But, if these Friends partook of the Puritan sternness, they partook also of their sturdy stuff and their devotion to principle, regardless of consequence. A few years after John Payne’s coming to Pennsylvania, he was called to share the obloquy incurred by the sect and State of his adoption, through their determined and outspoken opposition to slavery. The hardest part of the trial to this loyal son of Virginia was that the abuse came from his beloved South. The trouble grew out of memorials on the subject of slavery addressed to Congress by the Friends’ Meeting and the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion of the Abolition of Slavery. One of these memorials sets forth that the petitioners “earnestly entreat your attention to the subject of Slavery ; that you will be pleased to countenance the restoration of liberty to these unhappy men, who alone in this land of freedom are degraded into per-

petual bondage, . . . and that you will step to the very verge of the power vested in you for discouraging every species of traffic in the persons of our fellow men."

The answer to this memorial — the natural and inevitable answer, in the heated state of the public mind not yet quieted from the fear of the rupture of the Constitution — was an attack upon the memorialists. "What right had the Quakers," it was asked, "having refused to risk their lives or fortunes in the conflict, to seek to impress their views upon the Government?" The Bible, which they interpreted so liberally, was metaphorically hurled at their heads, and, finally, it was declared on behalf of the South that the confederation was a compromise wherein each took the other, with its bad habits and respective evils, for better for worse; the northern States adopting the South with its slaves, and the South accepting the North with its Quakers.

Such taunts as these might well cut John Payne's heart, still loyal to Virginia as it was; but his mind was already beginning to be bowed beneath a weight of more personal trouble. The setting free of his slaves had seriously diminished his property, and the increased expenses of town-life, with the old habits of plantation hospitality, proved a great drain upon his de-



pleted purse. Philadelphia was spoken of at this time as a place of "crucifying expenses." The foreign traveller pronounced the necessities of life there far dearer than in Europe. The rent of a modest house was three hundred dollars a year; the wages of a servant rose from ten to twelve dollars a month, — a great sum in those days, yet not sufficient to secure good service, as we may infer from the constant complaints, which fill the letters of the mistresses. Elizabeth Drinker, for instance, records one failure after another, but at length appears to think she has found quite a treasure, despite a trifling drawback. "Polly Nugent," she says, "was this afternoon bound to us by her mother. She has been with us a week and appears clever; brought y<sup>e</sup> itch with her, which I hope we have nearly cured."

With costly and ineffective service, with beef at thirteen pence the pound, fowls a dollar a pair, and other viands in proportion, the expenses of John Payne's family proved far heavier than he had foreseen, and the depreciation of the currency at the same time contributed to cut down his income. In an unlucky hour he determined to go into business, taking with him his son John, as partner. It was easy to foresee the result of such a move on the part of a middle-aged planter, without business training.

He failed, and his failure signed his death-warrant.

But the gloom of his last years knew at least one gleam of brightness, and that was in the marriage of his daughter Dolly to John Todd, junior, a member, like himself, of the Society of Friends, — a young man of sterling character and not destitute of this world's goods. Dolly, at this time of her marriage, if we rightly reckon the date of her birth, was twenty-one, and her husband five years older. He was the third of his name, — his grandfather, John Todd, of New London Township, Chester County, having married Martha Wilson, and their son, his father, having married Mary Durbarrow, and settled in Philadelphia, where the young John Todd was born on the seventeenth of November, 1763. He was, therefore, twenty-six when, in the year 1789, he courted Dolly Payne; and twenty-seven when they were married in 1790.

The wooing of these young folks has faded into the shadowy past and left no record by which we can trace the secrets of the maiden's heart. Did she love him, or was the marriage made in obedience to the will of her father, who saw a providence in this offer coming from a man who had already won his confidence and respect? Tradition says that Dolly's first answer was that she never meant to marry, but

## A QUAKER GIRLHOOD

this may have indicated much or little as we translate it. It seems an undoubted fact that marriage in the early times was more an affair of business than with our generation. In those days a man, having come of age and accumulated or inherited a sufficient amount of property for comfortable living, began to look about for a wife. Some years later Mrs. Madison herself wrote to Governor Coles, anent his wish to secure a wife, in much the same tone she would have used had he been in search of a house-keeper. She fears that whilst they deliberate the finest girls will be chosen by some brisker suitor, goes on to enumerate the damsels who are already selected, and ends by wishing him a success proportionate to his merits and long search.

Probably, however, at the age of twenty, Dolly Payne's views on the subject of matrimony were of a more romantic cast than in those later years when she had seen more of the world. Perhaps, too, she already had begun to chafe under Quaker restrictions, and her gay, pleasure-loving nature hesitated to subdue itself for life to a drab-colored existence. Yet, when the matter was settled and the marriage definitely arranged, she seems to have accepted the situation cheerfully enough. At the close of the year 1789, she "passed the first meeting," a somewhat for-

midable ceremony, in which the Quaker maiden announced that she proposed taking John Todd in marriage, and hereby offered her decision for the approbation of Friends. After this, the bride-elect was obliged to pass yet another meeting, declaring that her intention still continued the same, and then, no objection being offered, the arrangements for the marriage were concluded.

The wedding was solemnized in the Friends' Meeting-House, on Pine Street, on the seventh day of First Month, 1790, when January whitened the earth with a bridal-veil of snow; but Dolly Payne wore no veil of lace or tulle, — like Bayard Taylor's Quaker bride, —

Her wedding gown was ashen silk,  
Too simple for her taste.  
She wanted lace about the neck  
And a ribbon at the waist.

It is hard to resist a feeling of pity for this young girl, so fond of everything gay and brilliant, compelled to forego the dancing and wine-drinking, the stealing of slippers, and mischievous merry-making which marked wedding festivities among the world's people, for the decorum and solemnity of the Quaker marriage in the bare-walled meeting-house, where, with neither priest nor chanting choir, this man and

maid stood up together upon the "women's side," and declared before God, and the assembled Society, their intention of taking each other as husband and wife.

After the simple Quaker fashion, the groom repeated the formula — "I, John Todd, do take thee Dorothea Payne to be my wedded wife, and promise, through divine assistance, to be unto thee a loving husband, until separated by death." The bride in fainter tones echoed the vow, and then the certificate of marriage was read and the register signed by a number of witnesses including John, James, Mary, and Alice Todd, relatives of the bridegroom, John and Mary Payne, the bride's father and mother, together with her sisters Lucy, Anna, and Mary Payne, and sixty others.

It was the custom for all who signed the marriage register to be entertained later at dinner and afterward at supper at the house of the bride's parents, and we may be sure that John Payne and his wife, who had brought their Virginia notions of hospitality with them to Philadelphia, did not fail to set forth a bountiful feast in honor of their daughter's wedding.

### III

#### FRIEND JOHN TODD

THE miniature of Dolly Todd, wife of Friend John Todd, junior, painted during the brief years of her first married life, and now in the possession of a collateral descendant, shows a youthful Quakeress in the bloom of early womanhood. Her neck is bare in front, save for the soft folds of a lace kerchief over the shoulders. The lips are smiling, and the eyes have a wistful shyness more bewitching than all the full-blown charms of the later portraits. Above the brow falls a little fringe of hair beneath the tulle cap, whose band forms a sort of halo which, as a foreigner declared at first sight of a Quaker head-dress, "has power to give to a Polly the air of a Virgin Mary." About the throat is wound a four-stranded chain, and the kerchief is held by a large old-fashioned brooch, — ornaments somewhat at variance with the Virgin Mary effect, and recalling the love of finery which beset the little maid of Hanover County a dozen years before.

In truth Dolly Todd was not greatly changed in any way from her childhood days, for through life she carried the child's heart open to every passing impression, and to the last preserved all the freshness of feeling which belongs to early youth. The two years following her marriage with John Todd wrought many changes in her immediate family circle. Her younger sister Lucy, at the mature age of fifteen, became the wife of George Steptoe Washington, nephew of the President, and went back to Virginia to live at "Harewood," the Washington estate in Jefferson County, not very far from Harper's Ferry. A sad and sudden change came to the Payne family too in the death of the beloved father, which befell in 1792. It was a sorrowful end to so good and true a life, for he died bowed down by a sense of failure and disgrace. His small property he bequeathed entirely to his wife, leaving her sole executrix.

His funeral was held, after the fashion of his sect, in the meeting-house; thence, after the services, the corpse was borne by young men to the burial-ground. Arrived there, it was, according to Quaker custom, set down that the family might have one last look at the dead, and that "the Spectators have a sense of mortality by the occasion thus given them to reflect



upon their own latter end." Neither stately vault nor costly monument marked the resting place of the dead Friends. Crape and all outward badges of sorrow worn by survivors, were discountenanced as heathenish and out of harmony with the teachings of Scripture. — "What mourning," said their great apostle, "is fit for a Christian to have at the departure of a beloved relation or friend, should be worn in the mind which only is sensible of the loss."

At the time of her father's death, Dolly Todd and her husband were living quietly, but in great comfort and content, at number fifty-one South Fourth Street, not far from the famous hostelry of the Indian Queen. John Todd is frequently spoken of as "a wealthy young lawyer," but I have failed to find record of any sources of revenue outside of his profession, and unless those days differed greatly from these, a barrister of six or seven and twenty was not likely to have accumulated a fortune from his fees.

John Todd, senior, was a teacher, and pedagogy, too, is a profession not ordinarily productive of great wealth, although, among the Friends as among the Puritans, it was counted most honorable and influential. There was a certain John Todd, whether this one or not is not absolutely certain, who literally as well as figuratively left his mark on the rising genera-



tion. He was one of the four masters in charge of the Friends' academy for boys situated in Fourth Street below Chestnut.

One of his pupils recalling years afterwards his memories of this "Master of Scholars" describes vividly the discipline he meted out to the unruly:—

"After an hour of quiet time, everything going smoothly on—boys at their tasks—no sound but from the Master's voice while hearing the one standing near him—a dead calm—when suddenly a brisk slap on the ear or face, for something or for nothing, gave dreadful note that an irruption of the lava was now about to take place—next thing to be seen was strap in full play over the head and shoulders of Philgarlic. The passion of the Master growing by what it fed on and wanting elbow room, the chair would be quickly thrust on one side, when with sudden grip, he was to be seen dragging his struggling suppliant to the flogging ground in the centre of the room. Having placed his left foot upon the end of a bench, he then with a patent jerk, peculiar to himself, would have the boy completely horsed across his knee, with his left elbow on the back of his neck to keep him securely on. In the hurry of the moment he would bring his long pen with him, gripped between his strong teeth (visible the while), causing the both ends to descend to a parallel with his chin and adding much to the terror of the scene. His face

would assume a deep claret color, his little bob of hair would disengage itself and stand out, each particular hair, as it were, up in arms and eager for the fray.

“Having his victim thus completely at command and all useless drapery drawn up to a bunch above the waistband, and the rotundity and the nankeen in the closest affinity possible for them to be, then once more to the staring crew would be exhibited the dexterity of master and strap. By long practice he had arrived at such perfection in the exercise that, moving in quick time, the fifteen inches of bridle-rein (*alias* strap) would be seen after every cut elevated to a perpendicular above his head; whence it descended like a flail upon the stretched nankeen, leaving on the place beneath a fiery red streak at every slash.”

It may have been an early acquaintance with these severe educational methods, which led Dolly Todd to determine that her son should be brought up under milder sway, and to adopt the reactionary course of indulgence which led to his ultimate ruin. The boy who was destined to cause his mother many a heartache in after years was welcomed with the greatest rejoicings. His birthday fell on the twenty-ninth of February in the leap-year of 1792. A Quaker baby, he knew neither christening robe nor god-father, nor sprinkling of conse-

crated water, but in the silence of the birth-chamber his parents gave him, in honor of his mother's father, the name of John Payne Todd.

A little more than a year after the birth of this son, in the summer of 1793, another child was born in the modest home in South Fourth Street. This baby son, named William Temple Todd, lay in placid unconsciousness upon its mother's breast, when a terrible pestilence spread its dark wings over the city without. The first death which attracted public attention in Philadelphia was that of Peter Aston who died on the nineteenth of August, after a strange and sudden illness. The next day several other deaths followed, and men began to shake their heads and whisper the dreadful name of "Yellow-fever." Day by day the disease increased, and panic struck the heart of the boldest. In the bank, the market, or the church, nothing was talked of but the fever, its symptoms and its remedies.

The doctors were at the end of their resources. No suggestion was too absurd to be adopted in the effort to stop the ravages of the fatal disease. Disinfectants of all kinds, tar, camphor, and "thieves' vinegar" were used in vain. Still the pestilence advanced and claimed victims by the scores and hundreds. The whole city fell under the influence of the panic. Folk

who at first had crowded together to talk of their neighbors' illness, now passed each other hurriedly and almost without recognition, on opposite sides of the street. "The old custom of hand-shaking," says a contemporary and member of the Committee of Public Safety, "fell into such general disuse that many shrank back with affright at even the offer of the hand. A person wearing crape or any appearance of mourning was shunned like a viper." The public gloom deepened. Bells tolled incessantly, and funerals blocked the streets, till at last, by city ordinance, the burials were performed by night. The heat was unbearable. Business was at a standstill. Rich and poor alike had but one thought, — to escape with the utmost possible speed from the death-stricken town. A week after the outbreak of the fever, the removals began, and for weeks carts, wagons, "coachees," and chairs were occupied in transporting families and furniture into the country.

Among this throng of motley vehicles was a litter bearing a young mother, the wife of John Todd and her new-born child. Their destination was Gray's Ferry, a charming wooded spot, on the banks of the winding Schuylkill, at the crossing of the Baltimore post-road; near enough to the city to be acces-

sible, even for an invalid, yet out of immediate danger of infection. At this time Gray's Ferry was the favorite suburban pleasure-resort of Philadelphians and was spoken of as "a prodigy of nature and art," — nature being represented by a charming succession of dells and groves, while art appeared in the grottos and hermitages, Chinese bridges and flotilla of boats, which made the attractions of Gray's Inn and gardens. In summer the Philadelphians sailed down the river to sit under these trees and seek the coolness of the grottos, and in winter merry parties drove in sledges over ice and snow, sure of a warm welcome and a hot supper at the inn, where they might afterward, if they would, dance half the night away.

Dolly Todd's young friends knew Gray's Ferry and its charms well. Elizabeth Drinker sets it down as a reprehensible thing that "Molly Drinker, Betsey Emlen, Sally Large, Geo. Benson, Rich<sup>d</sup> Smith, Rich<sup>d</sup> Morris and Jona<sup>n</sup> Hervey, were all at Gray's Ferry this afternoon, as Molly this evening informs me; which I by no means approve of. Friends' children going in companies to public houses is quite out of character."

Friends' children however went and continued to go, fascinated by the amusements

and the gayety and the fashion which in these days marked the resort. Literature as well as fashion paid its tribute to this spot, and a poem, inspiring to contemporaries but rather ridiculous to posterity, apostrophized it, in 1787, as

“ A seat removed from public strife and care,  
For which the Muse in gratitude has brought  
To Schuylkill’s bank the Greek and Roman thought ;  
There to her Barlow gave the sounding string,  
And first taught Smith and Humphreys how to sing.”

Gray’s Ferry may claim a somewhat more substantial title to fame than having taught Smith and Humphreys how to sing, in having been the scene of a grand reception given by the Pennsylvanians to Washington as he passed northward in 1789 to take the oath of office as President at New York. A queer old print shows the festive scene ; the floral arch, the flag with its thirteen stars floating beneath a liberty-cap, the river covered with row-boats, and the road with very stiff gentlemen on very restless horses.

All this gay pageant was a thing of the past when Dolly Todd’s litter crossed the bridge, and she in her weak condition had little strength for any impression, save of relief that the tedious journey was done, and that at last the terrible sights and sounds of the stricken city were left behind, and that she was safe among the trees



and the birds and the great healthy world of nature which was always dear to her.

Having seen his wife and two little children transported to the peace and comparative security of this place, John Todd, like the true man he was, returned to the plague-stricken town to face its risks in the performance of his duty. He found the shadow of death falling on his own household and arrived only in time to attend the dying bed of his father and mother. In these last days his father made a will wherein he appointed his two sons, John and James, and his friend "Samuel Jones of this city, House-Carpenter," as his executors — He bequeathed to John the sum of five hundred pounds, and to his little grandsons, John Payne Todd and William Temple Todd, fifty pounds each. The residue of the estate was to be divided equally among his five grandchildren; but his silver watch was especially noted to be given to his son John, in trust for John Payne Todd, or in case of his death, for William Temple Todd.

The sudden death of his father and mother might well have tried John Todd's courage and shaken his resolution; but he did not falter. Friends and clients were calling upon him from all sides for assistance and he stayed to render it. To his wife's anxious protests he

made answer, that let what might befall him these duties must be done, and after that he would never leave her again.

He did indeed return to Gray's Ferry and to her, but only to die, and (still harder fate) to bring the dreaded disease to those he loved best. He died, or in the quaint language of an old Friend, "settled in the land of fixedness," on the twenty-fourth of October, 1793, and his young wife, who had recklessly thrown herself into his embrace regardless of danger, took the infection and lay at the point of death for three terrible weeks. When she recovered, it was to find herself a widow with only one child. Her baby as well as her husband had died, and thus doubly bereft, she struggled back to life beneath a heavy cloud of sorrow and depression.

The autumn came and passed,—the frosts of November at length brought a surcease of the epidemic. The pestilence had spent its force. The death-list shortened, the quarantine relaxed its strictness; the same chairs, wagons, and "coachees" which had been driven with the haste born of fear along the roads leading out from Philadelphia, pausing neither for hill nor mire, now came slowly back again. The streets ceased to look like those of a city of the dead. Doors stood open



and lights shone behind the window panes at night.

With the renewal of confidence, men began to be ashamed of their panic, and sought to atone for their suspicion and selfishness by increase of friendliness and cordiality. With sobered affections they strove to draw nearer together to hide the terrible gaps which over four thousand deaths had made in their ranks; head-stones were raised in the burying-grounds, which, in the haste of the midsummer burials, was described as looking like a ploughed field. Soon all to outward eye went on much as before. Men bought and sold, the playhouse was reopened, and the accustomed ways of life ran on like a clock that has but been stopped for a day. But there were many for whom that clock would never strike again, and the tragedy of whose ending is all compressed into the printed names included in such death lists as that wherewith Matthew Carey closes his "Short Account of the Malignant Fever, lately prevalent in Philadelphia," in which, in the old fine print on the yellow page, I read,—

"John Todd, sen.—teacher and wife.

John Todd, jun.—attorney at law."

In November the will of John Todd, junior, was probated. It was found to antedate the

will of his father by nearly three months, being drawn in early July before the birth of his second child. It consists of little more than the following simple statement: —

“I give and devise all my estate, real and personal to the Dear Wife of my Bosom, and first and only Woman upon whom my all and only affections were placed, Dolly Payne Todd, her heirs and assigns forever, trusting that as she has proved an amiable and affectionate wife to her John, She may prove an affectionate mother to my little Payne, and the sweet Babe with which she is now *enceinte*. My last Prayer is may she educate him in the ways of Honesty, tho’ he may be obliged to beg his Bread, remembering that will be better to him than a name and riches. Having a great opinion of the integrity and honourable conduct of Edward Burd and Edward Tilghman, Esquires, my dying request is that they will give such advice and assistance to my dear Wife as they shall think prudent with respect to the management and disposal of my very small Estate, and the settlement of my unfinished legal business. I appoint my dear Wife executrix of this my will.

“Witness my hand and seal this second day of July in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and ninety three.

“JOHN TODD Junr.”

SEAL.

## IV

### “THE GREAT LITTLE MADISON”

THE widow of John Todd returned to Philadelphia bowed down by the trouble which had fallen so suddenly upon her young life; but in the fact that her life was young lay the secret of its swift rebound. Her sunny nature could not, if it would, tarry forever in the shadow, and her radiant youth refused to walk long in weeds. She was now twenty-five; still young in all her feelings and with the added independence of the matron. It was in her widowhood that Dolly Todd found her girlhood, and within a few months after her husband's death we see her the centre of her little social world, and so universally admired that her friend jestingly bids her: “Hide thy face — there are so many staring at thee!”

In estimating Dolly Todd's social position and financial condition at this time we pass again into the cloud of obscurity which hangs about all her early life. The biographers of Madison speak of him as marrying a wealthy

widow, and sketches of her own life represent her as on the crest of the wave of fortune and fashion. For my own part I find more interesting, as well as more credible, the witnesses who picture her in a humbler sphere, as going back with her little boy to live with her mother, and like the faithful, devoted daughter she was, to help her in the occupation of keeping boarders which John Payne's loss of property had made necessary for this Virginia lady as a means of support.

The seat of Government was now established in Philadelphia, and as the distance of the remoter parts of the country from the capital, combined with the difficulty of travel, kept the families of many public men at home, Representatives, Senators, and other officials were scattered about at taverns, more pretentious hotels, or boarding-houses. Very uncomfortable residences, for the most part, they were. John Adams, then Vice-President of the United States, writes to his wife from one of these abiding places: "What do you say? Shall I resign my office when I am three-score, or will you come with me in a stage-wagon, and lodge at a tavern in Fourth Street? I must contrive something new against next winter."

Fisher Ames wrote even more despairingly to his friend, Jeremiah Smith, begging him to

secure decent lodgings before his arrival. He intends, he says, to pass two days in New York, "and three more will, I trust, set me down in Philadelphia. Do not let me go down to the pit of the Indian Queen. It is Hades and Tartarus and Periphlegethon, Cocytus and Styx, where it would be a pity to bring all the piety and learning that he must have who knows the aforesaid infernal names. Pray leave word at the aforesaid Queen or any other Queen's where I may unpack my weary household goods."

Far more fortunate than John Adams or Fisher Ames, or any wretched denizen of ill-kept taverns, was Colonel Aaron Burr, for he was settled in the home-like lodgings presided over by Mrs. Payne, assisted, yes, surely assisted, by her beautiful daughter, Mrs. Todd. Colonel Burr was now a Senator, and nearing the height of power from which he was destined to fall so ignominiously. His personal reputation could hardly have been what it afterward became, else Mr. Madison would scarcely have chosen him to be his introducer at the house of a lady who had so impressed his fancy as he watched her at a distance that he ardently desired the honor of her acquaintance. In his old age Aaron Burr used to boast with a chuckle that it was he who made the match between James

Madison and Dolly Todd, and the boast was excusable, since few of his undertakings turned out so well, or did him so much credit.

“Dear Friend,” wrote Mistress Todd, all in a flutter, to her confidential friend, Mrs. Lee, one day in 1794: “Thou must come to me, — Aaron Burr says that the great little Madison has asked to be brought to see me this evening.” The eventful evening, destined to be so long remembered, arrived, and brought “the great little Madison.” He came, he saw, — *she* conquered.

Pretty Mrs. Todd might well feel flattered by attentions from such a source. James Madison was a man of parts (I like the good old phrase), one who had already won a more than national reputation. Five years earlier, the French traveller, Brissot de Warville, had written of him as of one well known in Europe. “Though young,” said de Warville, “he has rendered the greatest services to Virginia, to the American Confederation, and to liberty and humanity in general.” After a remarkably good guess at Madison’s age, which he correctly placed at thirty-eight, the writer continues: “He had, when I saw him, an air of fatigue. Perhaps it was the effect of the immense labors to which he has devoted himself for some time past.” “His look,” concludes the Frenchman, with his

nation's love of a neatly turned compliment, and a nicely balanced sentence, "his look announces a censor, his conversation discovers a man of learning, and his reserve is that of a man conscious of his talents and of his duties."

The great service to his country and to mankind, to which de Warville alludes, was, of course, the assistance he had given in the framing of the Constitution of the United States. That instrument, which a modern English statesman has pronounced the greatest work ever struck off by the mind of man in the same space of time, was, in large measure, the work of Madison. It was his profound familiarity with English Constitutional law which contributed to form it, and it was his sound logic which defended it when it stood in grave danger. It fell to him to fight for it in the halls of his native Virginia against such opponents as Patrick Henry, whose opposition began with the beginning of the preamble, and whose opening speech sounded the note of war, as he exclaimed, "Give me leave to demand what right had they to say 'We the *people*,' instead of 'We the *States*!'" The casting vote on the Constitution lay with Virginia, and Madison won it for the Union, and in winning it won for himself an undying fame to which his later honors could add little. "The Father of the Constitution" was the proudest



title his country could bestow, and the man who in collaboration with Jay and Hamilton had produced the "Federalist" had no honors to seek.

At the time when Mr. Madison asked for an introduction to Mrs. Todd he was forty-three years of age, — seventeen years older than the charming woman to whom he shortly determined, as he himself would have said, "to pay his addresses." He could not be said to have lost his youth, for he had never had any youth to lose. The oldest of many children, he early assumed the responsibilities of manhood, and from his childhood was a model of prudence, wisdom, and moderation. At Princeton, where he was sent to college, he is said to have limited his sleep to three hours a day that he might give the additional time to study, and when he returned to his home he settled down gravely to the task of instructing the younger children, until he bestirred himself to enter public life.

At thirty-two the first symptom of youth showed itself. He fell in love. The object of his affection was Miss Catherine Floyd, the daughter of General William Floyd, who lived on Long Island, in New York. General Floyd was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and was a delegate to the Con-



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tiutental Congress from the State of New York from 1774 to 1783. Mr. Madison formed an acquaintance with General Floyd, which led to an acquaintance with the general's daughter. This young lady he found so attractive that he soon made her a proposal of marriage, and she accepted him in spite of the fact that he was twice her age, as she had just passed her sixteenth birthday.

Whether Mistress Catherine had been influenced by her father or whether she had mistaken her own heart, we know not, but we learn that she soon after fell desperately in love with a young clergyman who "hung round her at the harpsichord," and proved, perchance, a warmer wooer than the measured, moderate Madison. Certain it is that the fickle maid transferred her affections. Tradition says that she sent her discarded lover a letter of dismissal which she sealed with a bit of rye-dough. This may have contained some hidden jest; but one can not fancy such liberty taken with the solemn young statesman, and in truth, it would have been ill jesting with a wounded heart. For the young lady's sake, let us hope it was the only seal that she could find, as was quite possible in those days.

When Jefferson heard the news of his friend's disappointment, he wrote him sympa-

thetically enough, but with that philosophy so easily summoned to meet the misfortunes of others: "I sincerely lament the misadventure which has happened from whatever cause it may have happened; should it be final, however, the world presents the same and many other resources of happiness. You possess many within yourself; firmness of mind and unintermitting occupation will not long leave you in pain. No event has been more contrary to my expectations, and these were founded on what I thought a good knowledge of the ground; but of all machines ours is the most complicated and inexplicable." The philosopher of Monticello had apparently quite forgotten the old days at Williamsburg when he was mad for love of Rebecca Burwell, and poured forth long letters full of wild despair to his college friend and confidant, Jack Page.

This misadventure in love lay ten years behind him on the journey of life when Mr. Madison called on Mrs. Todd, on that eventful evening in 1794, and his heart was free and ready to be taken captive by the beautiful young widow whose gown of mulberry satin, with tulle kerchief folded over the bosom, set off to the best advantage the pearly whites and delicate rose tints of that complexion which constituted the chief beauty of Dolly Todd.

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The two men who bowed before her in the candle-lighted parlor of her mother's house on that night, were singularly unlike in appearance as in character. Both were small of stature, though with a dignity of manner which atoned for lack of impressiveness in outward form; but the resemblance went no further. Burr was full of grace, of charm, of vivacity, with mobile expressive features, and an eye potent to sway men against their will, and women to their undoing. Madison was slow, unimpassioned, and unmagnetic, yet with a twinkle in his mild eye which bespoke a dry humor. Burr was the younger of the two by five years, but at this time stood on a higher round of the ladder of fame, with, apparently, the better chance of being the first to reach the top. Burr was a Senator, while Madison was in the lower house, having been defeated in the contest for the seat of Senator from Virginia. In this case, as in so many others, however, the race was not destined to be to the swift, and the man who was to be at the head of the nation in the future days was not the brilliant, versatile, unscrupulous Burr, but the slow and steadfast Madison.

It is to be set down to Dolly Madison's credit that behind the unimpressive exterior of this little man in the suit of black, set off

with ruffled shirt and silver buckles, she was able to discover the real greatness and solid worth, so that when, not long after this first meeting, Mr. Madison declared himself openly as a suitor for her hand, she could not find it in her heart to say him "nay."

Just how soon her feelings began to respond to those of her admirer, history does not record. Those were days of brief widowhoods and there were few to cavil or to suggest that it followed hard upon, when, within a few months of the loss of her first husband, the rumor of Dolly Todd's second courtship began to creep abroad. Madison was rallied by his associates upon his captivation, and the report of his engagement to the young widow was soon whispered about Philadelphia, and ere long reached the doors of the President's mansion; whereupon Martha Washington sent for Dolly Todd and, with the familiar intimacy of a family connection (Dolly's sister having married her husband's nephew), proceeded to catechise her after a somewhat autocratic fashion. Was it true, she asked, that Mrs. Todd was engaged to James Madison? Blushes and stammers cried her-mercy, but my Lady Grand Inquisitor proceeded, bidding her confess without shame, for he would make her a good husband, and she might be happy with

the approbation of the President and her august self.

Evidently Mrs. Washington did not share the self-distrust in such delicate matters which marked the conduct of Washington himself, who, when asked to give advice in a similar affair, wrote, with his customary good sense, and more than his customary sense of humor : "For my own part, I never did nor do I believe I ever shall give advice to a woman who is setting out on a matrimonial voyage. First, because I never could advise one to marry without her own consent ; and, secondly, because I know it is to no purpose to advise her to refrain when she has obtained it. A woman very rarely asks an opinion, or requires advice on such an occasion, till her resolution is formed, and then it is with the hope and expectation of obtaining a sanction, not that she means to be governed by your disapprobation, that she applies."

In Dolly Todd's case Washington and his wife were of one mind in approving of the alliance in question, and having received the royal permission to be happy, Mrs. Todd allowed her betrothal to James Madison to be formally proclaimed, and arrangements were made for a speedy marriage.

In the early part of September, 1794, the

wedding party, consisting of Mr. Madison and Mrs. Todd, with her sister Anna Payne, a well-grown girl of twelve, and her little son, scarcely more than a baby, set out from Philadelphia for the home of Mrs. Todd's sister, Mrs. George Steptoe Washington, at Harewood, Virginia, where the wedding was to take place.

A strange contrast this gay company, in coach and on horseback, with attendants and retainers all in holiday humor, must have offered to that other sombre procession which but a year before had moved slowly out from this same city, to the sound of tolling bells and booming guns, amid the white-faced and terror-stricken crowds, while she who was now the centre of all this life and gayety had then lain pale and weak in her litter, with her baby on her breast. One wonders if she gave it a thought as she drove along in her coach. If she did, she gave no sign. No woman ever understood better than Dolly Madison the art of adapting herself to the shifting scenes in the play of human life; and therein lay one considerable source of her success.

Let us admit here, at the outset of her career, that she was not a great woman, — not of that stern stuff which formed some of the heroines of Revolutionary and Colonial days; that she was not even a woman given to profound or in-



dependent thought, or to sifting opinions or weighing arguments. Why should she, when some stronger mind was always at hand to form her opinions for her? Her nature was like a lake reflecting brightly whatever image was nearest, and when one by one all earthly images were withdrawn it lay, tranquil to the last, reflecting Heaven.

At the end of a week's journey, over roads winding picturesquely across the Susquehanna, through Baltimore town, over Maryland hills, and, at length, entering Virginia and Jefferson County, at the shore of the Potomac, Harewood was reached; and there took place the event, of which, to the end of his days, Madison continued to speak as the most fortunate of his life. Dolly Payne Todd and James Madison were married on the fifteenth day of September, 1794. The ceremony was performed not after the fashion of the Friends, but according to the rites of the Church of England, by the Rev. Dr. Balmaine, of Winchester, Virginia, a connection, by marriage, of Madison. The wedding was followed by the usual festivities, and bridesmaids and groomsmen danced and made merry in holiday attire. No record has come down to us of the costume of the bride and groom; but it is a matter of course that Mistress Todd wore some such silver satin

as that gown of hers reverently preserved to-day in a certain southern household, and we know that Madison wore ruffles of Mechlin lace, for the bridesmaids cut them up afterwards for mementos.

Another bridegroom of the period who had the misfortune to lose his trunk on his wedding journey, has left an inventory of its contents, and as he was a great beau and made pretensions to the highest fashion, we may conclude that it represented a modish wedding outfit for a gentleman in the year 1794. The list includes: "A light-colored broadcloth coat, with pearl buttons; breeches of the same cloth; ditto, black satin; vest, swansdown buff, striped; ditto, moleskin, chequer figure; ditto, satin figured; ditto, Marseilles white; ditto, Muslinet figured; undervest, faced with red cassimere; two ditto, flannel; one pair of flannel drawers; one ditto, cotton ditto; one pair black patent silk hose; one ditto; white ditto; one ditto; striped ditto; ten or a dozen white silk hose; three pair of cotton hose; four pair of gauze ditto; a towel; twelve neck-kerchiefs; six pocket handkerchiefs, one of them a bandanna; a chintz dressing-gown; a pair of silk gloves; ditto old kid ditto."

In the midst of the wedding festivities the newly married pair started in their coach on



the journey of a hundred miles or more, which lay between Harewood and the Madison estate at Montpelier (so Madison himself always wrote the name, insisting that the dropping of the second "l" was "a Yankee notion"). Few regions in the world are more beautiful than the one through which Mr. and Mrs. Madison drove in the blue autumn weather. Up the smiling Shenandoah Valley their way ran, over the wall of the mountains and across the head waters of the Rappahannock, — up hill and down dale, past many a Colonial homestead perched upon its wooded knoll or nestling in the hollow of the hills, till at last their road ended before the old-fashioned gateway of Montpelier, where, in the Blue Ridge country, about fifty miles north-west of Richmond, James Madison, Senior, had erected the first brick house ever built in Orange County. Then, as always, the chief charm of Montpelier lay outside its walls in the glorious stretch of fertile fields, framed in a setting of dark forest, and the great wall of mountains rising in full view from the portico.

In this delightful retreat James Madison and his wife settled down for the first weeks of their married life, and to this mountain nook, "within a squirrel's jump of Heaven," their thoughts turned lovingly, and often yearningly, in the busy and tumultuous years which lay

before them. From this time on, Montpelier and Montpelier alone, was *home* to them, and Dolly Madison by her tact and sweetness thoroughly disproved the saying that no house is large enough for two families; for as long as her husband's father and mother lived, it was their home as well as their son's, and their son's wife was all that a daughter could be to them.

As soon as Madison's marriage was made known, letters of congratulation began to pour in upon him and his bride. Three of these I quote. The first is from Bishop Madison, who writes to his nephew:—

WILLIAMSBURG, Nov. 12th, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR, — I cannot refrain sending you my sincere congratulations, upon an Event, which promises you so much Happiness. It was my intention to have paid you a short Visit in September, upon my Return from the Mountains, but heard, when in your Neighbourhood, that you were from Home, & engaged in the Pursuit which terminated so agreeably to yourself, & I trust also, to the Amiable Partner whom you have Selected. Present her too, if you please, with my Congratulations on & ardent wishes for your mutual Happiness. —

With the most Sincere Esteem, I am

Dr Sir y<sup>r</sup> Friend

J. MADISON.

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An equally cordial letter followed in the next month from General Horatio Gates, the hero of Saratoga, who had formerly lived in Virginia, but in 1790 had manumitted his slaves, and moved to New York:—

NEW YORK, 27<sup>th</sup> December, 1794.

MY DEAR SIR, — Permit me thus late to present you, & M<sup>rs</sup> Madison, mine, & my Mary's Compliments of Congratulation; and to wish ye both every Earthly Felicity. Make us also happy by saying you will both pay a Visit to Rose Hill next Summer;

with Mary's and My Most respectful Compliments to M<sup>rs</sup> Madison, I am

My dear Sir

Your faithfull

Humble Servant

HORATIO GATES.

It was not until spring that Madison received congratulations from his old friend and college mate Freneau, but when his letter arrived it was no less hearty than the others in its good wishes:—

MONMOUTH, May 20<sup>th</sup>,—1795.—

MY RESPECTED FRIEND, —

The Public Papers some time ago Announced your Marriage. I wish you all possible happiness

with the lady whom you have chosen for your companion through life — Mr<sup>s</sup> Freneau joins me in the same, and desires me to present her best respects to your lady and yourself — and should you ever take an excursion to these parts of Jersey, we will endeavour to give Mr<sup>s</sup> Madison and yourself — “if not a costly welcome, yet a kind.” —

I am, Sir,

with great Esteem

Your friend and humble Serv<sup>t</sup>

PHILIP FRENEAU.

Shortly after his marriage, Madison began building and rebuilding at Montpellier by the adding of new outbuildings and setting in order of old, which he continued, with the aid of an architect named Chisholm, through a series of years. He writes to Monroe that he is sending off a wagon to fetch nails for his carpenters, and as his building is nearly completed he asks if Monroe will allow him to secure a few articles which he had offered from the stock brought from France.

The articles ordered by Madison consist of “two table-cloths for a dining room, of about eighteen feet; two, three or four, as may be convenient, for a more limited scale; four dozen napkins, which will not in the least be objectionable for having been used, and two mattresses.” A biographer of Madison makes

himself very merry over this slender list, and comments with playful irony: "It was not an extravagant outfit even though it had not been meant for one of those lordly Virginia houses of which some modern historians give us such charming pictures;" but surely this writer would not have us believe that these articles were the entire dependence of the Madison household, even with the addition of the kitchen furnishings for which Madison asks further, adding with due humility: "We are so unacquainted with the culinary utensils in detail that it is difficult to refer to such by name or description as would be within our wants."

Certain it is, that the house at Montpelier was amply provided as time went on both with necessities and luxuries, and many a happy hour James and Dolly Madison spent in enlarging and adorning it; but pleasant and restful as the life at Montpelier might prove, it could at present be only an interlude. In a little more than a month the newly married pair were back in Philadelphia, whence Madison sends a letter to Jefferson on November sixth. James Madison was too important a man to be long spared from the national councils, and a letter of John Adams' written at the capital about the end of November reports him

as acting on one of the committees of the House of Representatives, of which he was a prominent member.

Mrs. Madison, on her return to Philadelphia, found the social season already begun, and plunged at once into the tide of entertainments. Her enjoyment of all the scenes of gayety was heightened, as she confessed, by its contrast with the repression of her youth, and she brought to social life a freshness of delight which greatly enhanced the charm of her personality and made her everywhere welcome, — especially as an enlivening factor in the levees held by President and Mrs. Washington, at the sober old house on Market Street, with its mottled brick walls and its two lamps glimmering owl-like before the door to light the way of strangers. It was, perhaps, the memory of the somewhat dreary formality of these official functions at the President's mansion, which led Dolly Madison to make her own receptions at the White House, in after years, so charmingly informal and easy. It speaks volumes for her tact and amiability that, little as she had mingled in the world, she was able to glide into this provincial court, with its rigid code of etiquette and its thousand little personal piques and grudges, without offending against any social canons or incurring any enmities.

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Philadelphia society between 1794 and 1797 was brilliant in every sense. The streets were gay with equipages, of which the most imposing was the President's white coach with scarlet panels, drawn by white horses, and attended by outriders wearing the scarlet and white livery of the Washington family. The houses were gay with dinners, routs, and balls, but best of all, the hosts and guests were brilliant in themselves. The French Revolution had driven many titled foreigners of distinction over-seas, and all who came to the United States of course found their way to the capital, if only to see the great Washington who was almost as much of a hero in France as in his native land. In the spring of 1794 M. de Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun (Heaven save the mark!) came over and settled for a time in Philadelphia at Oeller's Tavern on Chestnut Street. Shortly after the Madisons' return the Duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt also arrived, and began at once taking notes for his voluminous book on American peculiarities. Later Louis Philippe, followed by his brothers, the Duc de Montpensier and the Comte de Beaujolias, appeared in Philadelphia, where the Bourbon prince lodged humbly enough in a tiny room over a barber's shop. When he extended royal hospitality in this



apartment, he was compelled to seat half his guests on the bed, but with the happy grace of his nation, he remarked that he had himself occupied less comfortable places without the consolation of agreeable company. The royal exile, it is said, offered himself to one of the daughters of Mr. Bingham, but the parent, wiser than the father of Elizabeth Paterson, declined the doubtful honor, replying shrewdly : “ Should you ever be restored to your hereditary position you will be too great a match for my daughter. Otherwise she is too great a match for you.”

Among the foreign visitors to Philadelphia during these closing years of the century was a young Spanish Ambassador, described as “ a short full man,” and bearing the sounding title of Don Carlos Martinez, Marquis D’Yrujo, who presented his credentials, and soon after married Dolly Madison’s intimate friend Sally McKean, that merry, mischievous, altogether charming young woman, who looks out at us from Stuart’s portrait with lips that can scarcely refrain from smiling long enough to be painted, with neck and arms of snowy whiteness, and a general air of innocent and high-bred coquetry.

Of all the social events of the fashionable world at this time none were of such high importance as the Assemblies, held at Oeller’s



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tavern in a fine ball-room sixty feet square, with a musicians' gallery at one end, and walls "papered after the French taste with Pantheon figures on the panels." The rules governing these gatherings were very strict, and intended to secure behavior corresponding to the dignity of the names on the list of managers.

These regulations were framed and hung on the wall that all might read. They provided that, —

1. The Managers have the entire direction.
2. The Ladies rank in sets and draw for places as they enter the room. The Managers have power to place strangers and brides at the head of the Dances.
3. The Ladies who lead call the Dances alternately.
4. No Lady to dance out of her set, without leave of a Manager.
5. No Lady to quit her place in the Dance, or alter the figure.
6. No person to interrupt the view of the Dance.
7. The rooms to be opened at six o'clock every Thursday evening during the season. The Dances to commence at seven and end at twelve precisely.
8. Each set having danced a Country-Dance, a Cotillion may be called if at the desire of eight Ladies.

9. No Stranger admitible without a Ticket signed by one of the Managers, previously obtained.

10. No Gentleman admitible in boots, colored stockings, or undress.

The preparation of toilets for these Assemblies was an affair of serious importance. I find in a Philadelphia journal at the commencement of the season, under date of November twenty-seventh, 1794, an advertisement that "Lacave has the honor of informing the ladies of Philadelphia that he cuts and dresses hair in the most approved and late fashion. He also ornaments the head-dress according to the wish of his employers, with the handkerchief., ribbon, feather, flowers, gauze, perle, etc. All in the newest taste. He lives at number fourteen Cherry Alley, between Third and Fourth Streets."

All this dressing and dancing, this flirting and feasting amused and entertained Mrs. Madison far more than it did her husband, — a difference easily accounted for by the mere fact that she was under thirty while he was over forty. But the difference went deeper than this, for while the wife lived very much upon the surface of things and found her happiness in the occurrences of the moment, the husband saw beneath all this pleasant exterior and

was growing daily more disgusted with the envy, hatred, and malice which underlay it. He felt in his soul the degradation of the political broils which embittered the last years of Washington's administration. He began to talk seriously of giving up public life altogether, and returning to the simple delights of the country which had proved so entrancing in the early days of his married life at Montpelier. In this strain he wrote to his most intimate friend, counsellor, and confidant, Thomas Jefferson, who made answer: “Hold on, my dear friend, that we may not shipwreck! I do not see in the minds of those with whom I converse a greater affliction than the fear of your retirement; but this must not be unless to a more splendid, a more efficient post. There I should rejoice to see you. I may say; I *shall* rejoice to see you.”

Jefferson casts about in this letter for every argument and persuasion likely to influence his friend, and, at length, sharing evidently in the opinion of Abigail Adams, that no man ever prospered without the consent and co-operation of his wife, he adds at the end, “Present me respectfully to Mrs. Madison, and pray her to keep you where you are, for her own satisfaction and for the public good.”

Already the influence of the young wife

was a factor to be reckoned with, and the appeal to her powers of persuasion was by no means an idle compliment on Jefferson's part. From the time of her marriage her husband's career was her first care, and she devoted herself with the most unselfish affection to furthering his every interest. Her political creed was an adaptation of Decatur's motto: "My husband,—may he ever be right! but my husband, right or wrong."

Some influence, whether his wife's or not, we can only infer, did persuade Madison to hold his seat in Congress until the end of the Washington administration, and Mrs. Madison continued to make warm friends and admirers even among the political opponents of her husband. That staunch old Federalist, John Adams, looked upon Madison as a political apostate who had abandoned the truth according to Alexander Hamilton to follow the false Republican gods of Thomas Jefferson, but he wrote to his wife from Philadelphia:—

"MY DEAREST FRIEND.—I dined yesterday with Mr. Madison. Mrs. Madison is a fine woman, and her two sisters are equally so. One of them is married to George Washington, one of the nephews of the President, who are sometimes at our house. Mr. Washington came and civilly inquired after your health. These ladies, whose name is

Payne, are of a Quaker family, one of North Carolina.”

Thus it appears that Dolly Madison charmed John Adams, as she charmed every one else with whom she came in contact from the beginning to the end of her life. How did she do it? Assuredly not by conscious effort, or with pre-pense intention. It was what she was, rather than what she did or said which attracted all who came within the circle of her personal magnetism. Perhaps the best explanation of her attraction is offered by the remark of one of her nieces, who said lately, “I always thought better of *myself* when I had been with Aunt Dolly.”

Despite the happiness of her married life, the year 1795 opened sadly for Mrs. Madison, whose warm heart vibrated to every chord of family joys and family sorrows. Under date of January 5th in this year Elizabeth Drinker records in her journal: “I heard this evening of the death of two of Molly Payne’s sons, Temple and Isaac; the latter offended a man in Virginia, who some time after shot him with a pistol.”

In January of the year 1796 the will of John Payne, Mrs. Madison’s father, was brought up for probate, and letters testamentary were granted to the widow, Mary Payne, as sole

executrix. George Walker and John Todd, who had witnessed the will, were now both dead. Dolly Madison therefore was the only surviving witness. She and her two sisters came into court to testify to the signature: "This day," says the old record, "appeared Dolley P. Maddison [*sic*], of the State of Virginia, Gentlewoman, late Dolley P. Todd, who, being one of the People called Quakers and conscientiously scrupulous of taking an oath, Doth solemnly declare and affirm that she was present and saw her late father John Payne . . . sign, seal, publish, and declare the same as and for his Testament and last Will."

The estate left to Mrs. Payne consisted chiefly of lands in Western Virginia and Kentucky. In the Madison Papers are a number of letters on the subject of this property, for Madison loyally took upon his heavily-burdened shoulders all the interests, financial and otherwise, of his wife and her family.

In 1797 Washington's administration came to an end, and with it Dolly Madison's life in Philadelphia. The last public ceremony at which she and her husband took part was the inauguration of John Adams, and it was their privilege to witness the ineffably pathetic scene of Washington's farewell, when the people, frantic with grief, followed him to the very

door of his house as though they could not let him go.

One who witnessed the scene, writes of it thus : —

“Adams entered in a full suit of fine grey cloth, but every eye was fixed on Washington who wore a full suit of black velvet, his hair powdered and in a bag, diamond knee-buckles and a light sword with grey scabbard. Behind him was Jefferson, gaunt, ungainly, square-shouldered with foxy hair, dressed in blue coat, small-clothes, vest of crimson; near by was pale, reflective Madison and burly, bustling Knox. After the inaugural, Adams left the room followed by Jefferson; still people stood motionless till Washington descended from the platform and left the hall to go down the street to the Indian Queen, to pay his respects to the new President.

“The immense crowd followed him as one man, but in total silence. After he had gone in, a smothered sound went up from the multitude like thunder, for he was passing away from them to be seen no more. The door opened, and he stood on the threshold looking at the people. No man ever saw him so deeply moved. The tears rolled down over his cheeks; then he bowed slow and low, and the door closed.”

The Madisons now took their leave of Philadelphia and returned for a season to the



Virginia mountain home, where, during the Adams administration, Mrs. Madison led a quiet and domestic life, so hidden from the world that the record of it is fragmentary and defies research. Here and there, however, I find allusions to her in the letters written to her husband; Jefferson rarely closes his gravest communications without some salutations to her. Now, it is, "Present me affectionately to Mrs. Madison, and convey to her my entreaties to interpose her good offices and persuasions with you to bring her here and before we uncover our house, which will yet be some weeks." Again he bids Madison tell his wife "her friend, Madame d'Yrujo, is as well as one can be near so formidable a crisis." It is not too much to say of this young wife that there was not a single one of her husband's friends to whom she did not show herself as friendly as he, and that she was so closely associated in the minds of all with that husband, that they spoke of them always together.

Tradition attributes Jefferson's affection for Dolly Madison to a certain tenderness which he was said to have cherished in his early days for her mother, the beautiful Mary Coles, rumor even making him a suitor for her hand. But "certain tendernesses" were so common among the Virginia Cavaliers, and especially



## *"THE GREAT LITTLE MADISON"*

with the susceptible young Tom Jefferson, that had he taken all the children of his old flames into special regard, his sentiment must have embraced a goodly share of his native State. I incline, therefore, to the opinion that the warm place which young Mrs. Madison held in his esteem was primarily an extension of the regard which he had so long felt for her husband, but that this very soon gave place to a much more personal affection, in which his whole family shared, and which was simply and solely the result of Dolly Madison's gifts and graces.

In 1799 the whole country was saddened by the death of Washington. Mrs. Madison, like the rest of the world, wore the same mourning as for the death of a relative, and she and her husband went to Mount Vernon to express to the widowed Martha Washington the sympathy and condolence of near friends. In the same year they had been called to mourn for the loss of their kinsman Patrick Henry, who died at his estate, in Virginia, on the sixth of June. Save for such sorrows as these, the years of retirement passed peacefully with the Madisons.

In 1800 Mrs. Madison's sister, Mary Payne, was married to John G. Jackson, a member of Congress from Virginia. Otherwise her family circle knew few changes. Little Payne Todd was passing a happy childhood among the fields

of Montpelier. Mrs. Madison was enjoying the quiet Virginia life as much as she had enjoyed the gay days in Philadelphia, and Madison himself was as busy as ever, for he had withdrawn from the Congress of the United States only to serve his country after another fashion, in the halls of the Virginia Assembly. He and his wife never returned to take up their residence in Philadelphia, for, before Madison was called again to take part in national affairs, the seat of government had once more been changed — this time permanently — to the site on the northern bank of the Potomac agreed upon, after many arguments and discussions, so hot and bitter that they threatened the life of the nation: the new capital, christened WASHINGTON in honor of the nation's chief.

## V

### THE NEW CAPITAL

WASHINGTON, unlike Topsy, was made, instead of growing. Congress said: "Let there be a city!" but in answer to its command there arose no real city, but only a straggling line of fine buildings in the heart of a wilderness. The poet Tom Moore, who came over to America in the first years of the existence of the new capital, wrote ironically of

"This famed metropolis where fancy sees  
Squares in morasses, obelisks in trees,  
Which travelling fools and gazetteers adorn  
With shrines unbuilt and heroes yet unborn."

Another traveller reported that in a space as large as the entire town of New York, there was nothing to be seen save brick-kilns and laborers' huts. Gouverneur Morris wrote jestingly to the Princess de Tours et Taxis that nothing was wanted except houses, cellars, well-informed men, amiable women, and a few other trifles, to make the capital perfect, and

that it was indeed an ideal city — for future residence.

At the time when Dolly Madison came to Washington, and by invitation of President Jefferson assisted in his official hospitalities, the White House stood on the spot where it stands to-day, but uninclosed, on a stretch of waste and barren ground, separated from the Capitol by a dreary and almost impassable marsh, while the presidential mansion, unfinished as it was, and standing among the rough masses of stone and rubbish, looked more like a ruin than a rising dwelling. Of its interior we have a very graphic description in a letter written by Abigail Adams, whose ill fortune it was to take the brunt of the pioneering at the capital, and to have only time enough to set the White House in order for her successors. The conditions under which she began her life in Washington would surely have daunted any spirit less indomitable than hers.

On the twenty-first of November, 1800, she writes to her daughter Mrs. Smith, from the White House: —

“MY DEAR CHILD. — I arrived here on Sunday last, and without meeting with any accident worth noticing, except losing ourselves when we left Baltimore, and going eight or nine miles on the Frederick road, by which means we were obliged to go

the other eight through woods where we wandered two hours without finding a guide, or the path. Fortunately a straggling black came up with us, and we engaged him as a guide, to extricate us out of our difficulty; but woods are all you see, from Baltimore until you reach *the City* which is only so in name. Here and there is a small cot without a glass window, interspersed amongst the forests through which you travel miles without seeing any human being.

“In the city there are buildings enough, if they were compact and finished, to accommodate Congress and those attached to it; but as they are, and scattered as they are, I see no great comfort for them. The river, which runs up to Alexandria, is in full view of my window, and I see the vessels as they pass and repass. The house is on a grand and superb scale, requiring about thirty servants to attend and keep the apartments in proper order, and perform the ordinary business of the house and stables; an establishment very well proportioned to the President’s salary. The lighting of the apartments from the kitchen to parlors and chambers is a tax indeed, and the fires we are obliged to keep to secure us from daily agues is another very cheerful comfort. To assist us in this great castle, and render less attendance necessary, bells are wholly wanting, not one single one being hung through the whole house, and promises are all you can obtain. This is so great an inconvenience that I know not what to do, or how to do.

“The ladies from Georgetown and in this city have many of them visited me. Yesterday I returned fifteen visits, but such a place as Georgetown appears! Why, our Milton is beautiful, — but no comparisons! if they will put me up some bells, and let me have wood enough to keep fires, I design to be pleased. I could content myself almost anywhere three months; but surrounded with forests, can you believe that wood is not to be had, because people cannot be found to cut and cart it! Briesler entered into a contract with a man to supply him with wood; a small part, a few cords only, has he been able to get. Most of that was expended to dry the walls of the house before we came in, and yesterday the man told him it was impossible for him to procure it to be cut and carted. He has had recourse to coals, but we cannot get grates made and set. We have indeed come into a *new country*.

“You must keep all this to yourself, and, when asked how I like it, say that I write you the situation is beautiful, which is true. The house is made habitable; but there is not a single apartment finished, and all withinside, except the plastering, has been done since Briesler came. We have not the least fence, yard, or other convenience, without; and the great unfinished audience-room I make a drying room of, to hang up the clothes in. The principal stairs are not up, and will not be this winter. Six chambers are made comfortable. Two are occupied by the President and Mr. Shaw; two

lower rooms, one for a common parlor and one for a levee-room. Up-stairs there is the oval room, which is designed for the drawing-room, and has the crimson furniture in it. It is a very handsome room now; but when completed, it will be beautiful. If the twelve years in which this place has been considered as the future seat of Government had been improved, as they would have been in New England, very many of the present inconveniences would have been removed. It is a beautiful spot, capable of every improvement, and the more I view it, the more I am delighted with it."

Four months after this letter was written, Abigail Adams had turned her back upon the difficulties and the delights of White-House-keeping, and Dolly Madison was presiding over receptions and dinner-parties within the walls of the mansion.

The spring of 1801 saw Thomas Jefferson installed as President of the United States. After a bitter campaign of Federalists against Republicans, and a no less bitter struggle in the House when the votes for Jefferson and Burr were pronounced a tie, the former was at last declared the successful candidate, with the latter as Vice-President, and was duly inaugurated on the fourth of March. Mr. and Mrs. Madison could not be present to witness this crowning moment in their dear friend's life,



much as they must have longed to do so, for a sad family event detained them in Virginia, — Madison's father having died at the homestead at Montpelier, on the twenty-seventh of February, in the seventy-eighth year of his age. As soon, however, as the home duties could be discharged, Madison hastened to Washington to enter upon the office of Secretary of State to which Jefferson had early appointed him, and Mrs. Madison began her public life as the wife of a cabinet official.

The changes introduced by the new administration were sweeping, socially as well as politically. Jeffersonian simplicity was the watchword of the day. The new President had discarded the state and ceremony which marked the public functions of the Washington administration. A tradition, discredited by Henry Adams, but dear to the popular heart, related how, in place of driving to the Capitol in a coach drawn by six horses and attended by outriders, he had mounted his horse and ridden as any private individual might have done to the spot where he was to take the oath of office. The story is at least in keeping with the simplicity at which he aimed. His dress was as unpretending as his equipage, and he asked no higher title than that of citizen.

His admirers threw up their hats, and re-

joiced that the reign of "Anglomany" was ended and that there was to be a truly republican rule. His enemies, on the other hand, predicted the surrender of the country to French influence. Voltaire and Thomas Paine were to be the prophets, and Bonaparte the lawgiver of the new administration. So they said, and there was some ground for the prediction, though not perhaps for the exaggerated outcries of the public press.

Long after the United States had shaken off the political yoke of Great Britain, English customs and traditions still swayed the newly emancipated nation. Washington, with all his greatness, was a transplanted English squire; Adams and his administration reflected Puritan England, distilled through Massachusetts; but Jefferson came into office swayed professedly by different ideas and ideals. He had witnessed the early enthusiasm of the French Revolution, and rejoiced in its success. He recalled the mutual good offices exchanged between France and America, and contrasted them with the hostile attitude of England. Both were still fresh in the minds of men.

France had helped us in the struggle with Great Britain as no other nation could have done. We sent her Franklin. She lent us Lafayette. We pointed out to her the path of

liberty, and Franklin's "*Ça ira!*" furnished the chorus to the song of the French Revolutionists. There was thus much to stir a sentiment of sympathy with France; but gratitude is a feeblér emotion than resentment, and the true secret of the public sentiment which had put forward Thomas Jefferson lay in the old, unsubduable rancor against England.

A people is not changed in a day however, and there were many to bewail the undermining of the old faith, and the uprooting of the good old social traditions. In his *Reminiscences of a Life Time*, Goodrich gives himself up to a sad head-shaking over the degeneracy in manners public and private. This moralist, with the alliterative pen-name of Peter Parley, writes: "Before the Jeffersonian era, travellers who met on the highway saluted each other with formal and dignified courtesy, and children stopped as they passed a grown person and made the bow they had been practised in at school for such occasions. But as democracy spread, these formal salutations first subsided into a vulgar nod, half ashamed and half impudent, and then like the pendulum of a dying clock totally ceased."

Among the observers of the rampant democracy of the new republican court, none was more

bitterly resentful than Anthony Merry, the British Minister. He wrote home in deep disgust of his reception on the occasion when he went by appointment to meet the President of the United States. He complained that he was kept waiting in an ante-room, and finally presented, in a most undignified manner, squeezed against the wall of a passage-way, in the middle of which he and Madison unexpectedly encountered the President. Merry himself was in the most correct of ambassadorial costume, and, not unnaturally, was aghast to see Jefferson, his tall, shambling form clad in garments arranged with studied negligence, his shoes somewhat down at the heel and fastened with a shoe-string in place of bow or buckle, and his whole appearance indicative of utter indifference to the dignity of a British Minister's visit. "I could not doubt," writes the irate Merry, "that the whole scene was prepared and intended as an insult, not to me personally, perhaps, but to the Sovereign I represented."

Bad as this beginning was, worse remained to be told. Diplomacy, like hell, "knows no fury like a woman scorned," and a dinner-table *contretemps* threatened to grow into an international episode. Mr. and Mrs. Merry were invited to the White House to dine with other foreign min-

isters and members of the cabinet, with their respective wives. Mrs. Merry, a dame described by Aaron Burr as “tall, fair, and fat, — *mais pas trop*,” — and who, even more than her husband, had personal dignity at heart, looked forward, as a matter of course, to enjoying the precedence due to the most distinguished lady present; and great was her wrath when, at the announcement of dinner, Jefferson arose and offered his arm to Mrs. Madison, who, observing the other lady’s discomfiture, strove in vain to motion him to take Mrs. Merry. He declined to accept the suggestion, and led the way to the dining-room with the wife of the Secretary of State, while Mrs. Merry fumed in the procession behind.

A sweet opportunity of revenge came to the Merrys a little later. Jefferson, who was by nature a peacemaker, thinking, perhaps, that the lesson of democracy had been sufficiently taught, caused Mr. Merry to be asked informally whether he would accept an invitation to a family dinner at the White House, and understanding that the reply was an affirmative the President wrote with his own hand a personal invitation; to which this absurd person responded by a letter to the Secretary of State, asking whether the President of the United States had asked him to dinner as a private gentleman or as British

Plenipotentiary ; for, if as a private gentleman, he must obtain his Sovereign's permission, while, if the invitation was to be accepted in his official character, he must have an assurance that he would be treated with the respect due to it. Madison's rejoinder was brief and to the point, and left little doubt in Merry's mind that the President of the United States had decided to conduct his household, social and political, without advice from the British Minister.

One would think that the lesson by this time must have been thoroughly learned ; but when Jefferson's eldest daughter, Martha, who had married Thomas Mann Randolph, came to pay her father a visit, Mrs. Merry again returned to the charge, writing to inquire whether Mrs. Randolph came to Washington as the President's daughter or as the wife of a Virginia gentleman, as, in the former case, she would make the first call, but in the latter case should expect to receive it. Mrs. Randolph replied, under her father's instructions, that she was in Washington as the wife of a Virginia gentleman, and as such should expect the first call from the wife of the British Minister, as the canons of official etiquette drawn up by Jefferson declared that all strangers in the city should be visited by all residents of Washington.

These rebuffs were doubtless rankling in the

soul of Merry when later on he listened, with favor, to the treason which Burr whispered in his ear at Philadelphia; but, meanwhile, he saw fit to smother his indignation, and beyond a passing jest between Mrs. Randolph and Mrs. Madison, his disaffection met with little attention. Nor did he meet with more attention from his own government, for not only did it make no remonstrance, but Merry, greatly to his amazement, was at length informed that his request for a recall was granted, and that he would be relieved as Minister to the United States by David Montague Erskine. As Merry had never made any such request, he must have felt that the treatment from his own government was rather more insulting than that of which he so bitterly complained at the hands of the Republican President.

It would be hard to overestimate the social influence of Mrs. Madison in these early days of Jefferson's administration. As both the President's daughters were married and living at a distance, it was natural that much of the responsibility of official entertaining should fall on the wife of his most intimate friend, and chief cabinet officer. Many little notes have been preserved in which Thomas Jefferson begs Mrs. Madison and Miss Payne to dine with him, or presents his affectionate saluta-



tions, and asks their assistance in taking care of "female friends expected."

Next to the White House the residence of the Secretary of State was the resort of the largest number of visitors. In Mr. Madison's drawing-room, ministers, senators, and foreign diplomats mingled with freedom and ease. Here all party differences were laid aside, all strangeness ceased, and under Mrs. Madison's genial leadership Washington official society (made up of the most incongruous and inharmonious elements) became, as Jefferson himself testified, like one family.

The social importance thus, as it were, thrust upon Mrs. Madison left her as unspoiled as it found her. She preserved her old simple manners and habits with only such changes as the new environment required. Her table continued to be set and served in the old bountiful Virginia fashion. It was reported to her that the size and number of dishes at her table had been ridiculed by the wife of a foreign minister (it is not difficult to guess which), who had remarked that her dinner was more like a harvest-home supper, than the entertainment of a Secretary of State. Mrs. Madison replied to the criticism, with her usual good nature and good sense,—that the profusion of her table was the result of the prosperity of

her country, and she must therefore continue to prefer Virginia liberality to European elegance.

A member of Congress who shared the hospitalities of this bountiful table writes most appreciatively of its merits. "An excellent dinner," he records, after one of the feasts, and then proceeds to enumerate the dishes. "The round of beef of which the soup is made," he says, "is called 'bouilli.' It had in the dish spices, and something of the sweet herb and earlie kind, and a rich gravy. It is very much boiled and is still very good. We had a dish with what appeared to be cabbage, much boiled, then cut in long strings and somewhat mashed; in the middle a large ham, with the cabbage around. It looked like our country dishes of bacon and cabbage, with the cabbage mashed up after being boiled till sodden and turned dark. The dessert good: much as usual, except two dishes which appeared like apple-pie in the form of the half of a mush-melon, the flat side down, top creased deep, and the color a dark brown."

I hold in my hand a sheet of yellow paper, thrice folded, and addressed on the back to Mr. and Mrs. Dickins, wherein "Mr. and Mrs. Madison request the favor of Mr. and Mrs. Dickins to dine with them on Tuesday at four

o'clock," — and in a lower printed line, "An answer is requested."

These state dinners, after whatever fashion conducted, were formidable affairs, and a serious tax on both the strength and the purse of public men. The White House wagon was got out early in the morning to go to Georgetown to market, and the day's provisions often cost as much as fifty dollars. Even the President's salary was scarcely adequate to meet the expense of official entertaining, as Jefferson soon found, to the delight of his enemies. "He always thought," said the "*New England Palladium*," "twenty-five thousand dollars a great salary when Mr. Adams had it. Now he will undoubtedly think twelve thousand five hundred enough. Monticello is not far away; he can easily send home his clothes to be washed and mended; his servants he owns, and his vegetables he can bring from his estate."

State dinner-parties, heavily as they taxed time and money, were powerful political factors, however, and all the more so under the tactful sway of "Queen Dolly." The offer of her snuff-box was a balm to wounded feelings, and her hearty laugh raised a breeze which blew away many a diplomatic awkwardness. It was customary to dine in the middle of the afternoon, and the company frequently sat at table

throughout the whole evening, talking and drinking toasts. The old drinking habit was declining, and drunkenness no longer so fashionable as it had been; but Madison's port and madeira were popular, and though he himself was most temperate, and, as his body servant says, would scarcely more than raise his glass to his lips, his guests were for the greater part men who shared Willis's aversion to water-drinking, though lacking perhaps the subtle analysis of their dislike which the dapper *dilettante* gave when he declared, with a mock shudder, that water had tasted of sinners ever since the Flood.

Mrs. Madison was spared many of the questions of dinner etiquette which vex the soul of the English hostess, by a clause in the new republican code of manners, which declared that "at dinners, public and private, perfect equality exists between the guests, and to give force to the principle of equality or *pêle mêle*, and to prevent the growth of precedence out of courtesy, the members of the Executive at their own houses will adhere to the ancient usage of their ancestors, — gentlemen *en masse* giving place to the ladies *en masse*."

The autumn of the year after her coming to Washington brought Mrs. Madison a great pleasure in the visit of her dear friends, Mrs.

Randolph and Mrs. Eppes, to their father in the White House. Martha Jefferson, was almost exactly of the same age as Mrs. Madison, and they were bound together by the closest ties, while for Mrs. Eppes, the beautiful little Polly, who years ago had found Monticello "*bien différent de Paris*," Dolly Madison shared the admiration of the rest of the world.

To Mrs. Madison it fell to make the preparation of toilet, which were necessary to dames living several days' journey from a fashion model or a milliner, in an age when dress was even more important than now, and where, to be duly hideous in the mode, a woman must be attired in wide-spreading hoops, with high-heeled shoes and hair tortured into pyramids and crisped into curls, or cut off to be replaced by the more conveniently arranged wig.

This fashionable wig was greatly coveted by all dames and damsels who aspired to belle-ship. Charming Eliza Bowne writes home: "Now, mamma, what do you think I am going to ask for? A Wig!" She complains that she cannot dress her hair "stylish," and cannot endure a second time the mortification of being the only young woman wearing her own hair at the assembly. Then the artful pleader argues that in a year the price could be saved in pins and paper, and finally urges an imme-

diate remittance of the necessary five dollars to procure the yearned-for article before the next assembly. The wig question, it would seem, was agitating the whole country, or at least the petticoated half of the nation, for in view of the coming visit to Washington, Martha Jefferson Randolph writes to her father from Virginia :

Oct. 29, 1802.

DEAR PAPA, — We received your letter, and are prepared with all speed to obey its summons. By next Friday I hope we shall be able to fix a day; and probably the shortest time in which the horses can be sent after receiving our letter will determine it, though as yet it is not certain that we can get off so soon.

Will you be so good as to send orders to the milliner, — Madame Peck, I believe her name is, — through Mrs. Madison, who very obligingly offered to execute any little commission for us in Philadelphia, for two wigs of the color of the hair enclosed, and of the most fashionable shapes, that they may be in Washington when we arrive? They are universally worn, and will relieve us as to the necessity of dressing our own hair, a business in which neither of us are adepts.

I believe Madame Peck is in the habit of doing these things, and they can be procured in a short time from Philadelphia, where she corresponds, much handsomer than elsewhere.

Adieu, dearest Father.

This kind of commission was specially pleasing to Mrs. Madison whose love of shopping was only second to her love for her friends. The winter of 1802-3 was one of the happiest and gayest of her life. Her young sister Anna who lived with her, brought to the house much company, which was always specially congenial to Mrs. Madison, and she found much unselfish delight, too, in the social success of the President's daughters. In after years, she loved to tell of the deep impression made on Washington society by the brilliancy of the older sister and the radiant beauty of the younger. Their stay in the capital was short, however, for Mrs. Randolph had left a large family of small children at home in Virginia, and in January they bade farewell to Washington, one of them never to see it again. In little more than a year, Mrs. Eppes, always delicate, faded out of life and died in her sister's arms, leaving two little children to that sister's care.



## VI

### WIFE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

WHILE Madison was Secretary of State, Gilbert Stuart painted for him a number of family portraits. The likeness of the Secretary is, I suspect, a little flattered, and lends a light to the eye and a ruddy tone to the skin which are absent from all other portraits. The picture of Mrs. Madison is less satisfactory, and though she herself was quite enthusiastic over its merits, it certainly does not do justice to the alertness and vivacity of the original. Far better is the miniature done by Lieber at the same time with a companion picture of Madison, — both full of charm.

Stuart painted also a portrait of Anna Payne, and that lively young lady was one of his especial favorites. One day while sitting to him she complained that it was really too bad that he had never made any portrait of himself, whereupon, with a few swift and skilful touches, the painter introduced a burlesque likeness of his own features as part of the drapery of Mistress Anna's portrait.

It was a great pleasure to Mrs. Madison to have this young sister with her, and it was with deep regret that she parted with her, at her marriage to Mr. Richard D. Cutts, a dark-haired, broad-browed, handsome young man of good family, and of such marked ability that he was chosen for many years as Representative to Congress from Maine. He was regarded with favor by many bright eyes in Washington, and was quite a squire of dames at home and abroad. "Richard Cutts went shopping with me yesterday morn," writes Eliza Bowne, and adds, "Engaged to go to the play next week with him."

Mr. and Mrs. Madison appear to have been entirely satisfied with the character and position of Mr. Cutts, but to Mrs. Madison it was a trial to give up even partially the sister who had been like a daughter to her, and the District of Maine where Anna must look forward to making her future home was further from Virginia than it is to-day from Alaska.

Nevertheless to a lover of gayety there was much to cheer in the preparations for the marriage which was celebrated with great merry-making in April, 1804. The bride and groom departed afterward for Maine, and Mrs. Madison followed them along their wedding journey with loving messages and a

full account of all that was going on in Washington.

These letters are a curious reflection of Mrs. Madison's mind which was wont to see life somewhat out of focus. Small things in them are writ large and large things small. Much space is occupied with the Baron von Humboldt's visit, with the Fourth of July oration delivered by Mr. Van Ness, with tea-drinking with the Fingays and Mrs. Forrest; a few lines coupled with moral reflections are devoted to the death of young Mrs. Eppes which occurred just at this time, and exactly one sentence is given to an event which was shaking the country with wild excitement. On the sixteenth of July, 1804, she writes that they are about setting out for Montpellier. At the close of the letter, quite by the way as it were, she adds, "You have no doubt heard of the terrible duel, and death of poor Hamilton." Not a word further touching that awful July morning when Alexander Hamilton was shot through the body by Aaron Burr under the rocky heights of Weehawken. The news had flown like wildfire all over the country, — everywhere shops were closed, flags at half mast, church-bells tolling, and half the nation wearing badges of mourning for the great dead, and Mrs. Madison has but a passing word and regret for it all.

The silence of Mrs. Madison on this, as on all the leading questions and burning issues of the day, may be interpreted as part of that caution and good judgment which warned her not to involve her husband by the expression of an opinion sure to be publicly understood as a reflection of his. There was a grain of truth in the remark of a diplomatist, that he preferred to marry a fool rather than a clever woman, as the former could only compromise herself, whereas the latter might compromise both herself and her husband. Dolly Madison was further removed from folly than from cleverness, but there is no doubt that a great element of her success lay in the negative quality of making no false moves. She was brilliant in the things she did not say and do.

In the matter of the Burr-Hamilton duel, it was probable that, under all her genuine regret and horror of the tragedy, there was a certain relief of mind at seeing a formidable enemy of her husband and of her husband's nearest friend thus suddenly swept from the field. The word "enemy" is, perhaps, too strong to use in this case, especially of one who had been a coadjutor in the great work of the "Federalist;" yet it was only a few years before that Hamilton had written, "I am convinced that Madison, co-operating with Jefferson, is at

the head of a faction decidedly hostile to me and my administration, and actuated by views, in my judgment, subversive of the principles of good government, and dangerous to the union, peace, and happiness of the country." A relief it certainly was to Jefferson and Madison to be rid of this worrying critic; but they never desired to be rid of him in such a way; nor could they fail to feel horror and indignation at "the deep damnation of his taking off." Yet they failed signally to show their indignation by their treatment of Hamilton's murderer.

When Burr fled from the justice which was likely to be meted out to him in New York, he skulked about for some time in Philadelphia, plotting treason with Anthony Merry, who, after the wont of foreign ministers, had escaped from the heat of Washington after the adjournment of Congress. Burr was already brooding over his scheme to break up the Union, and Merry, embittered by his personal pique, was ready to fall in with his plans, and lend him what help he could in seeking the aid of his government. On the sixth of August, Merry wrote to Lord Harrowby: "I have just received an offer from Mr. Burr, the actual Vice-President of the United States (which position he is about to resign), to lend his assistance to His Majesty's government in any manner in which they may

think fit to employ him ; *particularly in endeavoring to effect a separation of the western part of the United States from that which lies between the Atlantic and the mountains in its whole extent.*"

Blacker treason no man ever plotted. Yet, when this murderer and traitor returned to Washington he had the effrontery to demand the social recognition due to the office which he had thus shamefully prostituted, and Jefferson and Madison (ignorant, of course, of his intended treason to the nation, but knowing full well his personal character) were weak enough to yield it to him. Burr's biographer writes : "The President and Vice-President were on about the same terms as ever. Colonel Burr dined at the White House twice a month. Between himself and Mr. Madison there was an appearance of friendliness and a growing reality of reserve. Theodosia and the beautiful Mrs. Madison seem to have been on terms of considerable intimacy." This intimacy was, no doubt, reckoned upon by Burr as a factor of some political importance ; but whatever influence Mrs. Madison had over her husband was purely personal ; she neither mingled nor wished to mingle directly in politics. She seems to have accepted quite literally the poet's instructions to her sex : "Your best, your noblest



mission is to *please* ; ” and within the limits of her ambition no one was more successful.

Social success, such as hers, is not won without sacrifices. The four seasons spent in the arduous and fatiguing duties and pleasures of life at the capital had begun to tell upon her health. The dampness of the malarial marshes about Washington and the recently overturned earth were probably responsible for the serious illness which overtook her in the summer of 1804, fortunately not until she was safely ensconced in her dry and healthful mountain home. Here the inflammatory rheumatism which troubled her throughout her life developed itself, and she declared that never before had she known what it was to suffer such pain. Her husband's mother, already an old lady, proved herself an efficient and untiring nurse, but the invalid's nerves were tried by the never-ceasing round of visitors who were accustomed to look upon Montpellier as an agreeable stopping-place, and to consider an invitation as an unnecessary formality. On the day when she was suffering most, fifteen or twenty of the family connections came to dinner ; but the invalid was too ill to leave her bed, and was spared the task of social entertaining which was beginning to prove a serious burden, as is evident from the stray half-unconscious confessions which



now appear from time to time in the confidences of her domestic letters.

It was a great relief to Mrs. Madison and to her husband occasionally to run away from all these domestic cares and be themselves the visitors. Jefferson's house at Monticello was situated near Charlottesville, about thirty miles to the southwest of Montpelier, and the Madisons' horses easily traversed the distance in a single day. The doors of Monticello, always open to guests, were thrown wider than ever at the approach of the Madisons, who were prime favorites with every one in the household, and such frequent guests that a special chamber was set apart and known as the Madison room.

Mr. and Mrs. Madison were constantly receiving such notes as the following:—

MONTICELLO.

DEAR SIR, —

We shall be happy to see Mrs. Madison and yourself to-morrow, and shall wait dinner for you till half past four, believing you will easily reach this before that hour. My Ford has been a little injured by the freshet, but is perfectly safe. It has a hollow of about nine inches deep and six feet wide, washed in one place exactly in the middle of the river, but even in that it will not be to the belly of the horse. I salute you with great affection and respect.

TH. JEFFERSON.

Monticello would have been an interesting spot to visit even without the inspiring presence of its master, though, indeed, it seemed so much a part of him, that it was difficult to separate them. Here all Jefferson's inventive fancy was turned loose, and the whole house was full of his strange devices. The weather-vane ingeniously contrived to mark the direction of the wind on a dial-plate; the clock hung above the doorway with its two faces, one turned inward toward the hall, the other out toward the portico; the cannon-ball weights which moved the clock and rolled over a plate marking the days of the week, — these were only a few of Jefferson's inventions. The most curious arrangement of all was the planning of his bedroom, which was divided from that of his wife by a partition through which an archway was cut, and under this arch stood the bed, half in each apartment.

Many years before Mrs. Madison visited Monticello Mrs. Jefferson had died, and Jefferson would have been left lonely indeed but for the love of his children and later of his grandchildren, and the companionship of old and true friends whom he loved to gather about him. The Madisons often extended their visits over a period of weeks, and they were treated entirely as members of the family. It was Mrs. Madi-

son's delight to sit down with the elder Randolph girls at their tasks of mending or embroidery, and to beguile the sorrows of the babies with fairy stories and kisses.

One of the family traditions tells of a scene at breakfast when little Ben, finding his skill unequal to the dissection of his muffin, called upon Mrs. Madison who sat next him for aid. She had begun to cut the muffin when Master Ben's voice said earnestly, "No, no; not that way." "How then?" asked the visitor, amused at his seriousness. "Why," said the child, "you must tear him open, and put butter inside, and stick holes in his back, and then pat him and squeeze him till the juice runs out."

Mrs. Madison laughed heartily and complied. It was characteristic of her to be as sincerely bent upon pleasing this baby boy as though he had been a foreign minister or a Supreme Court judge.

After her recovery, Mrs. Madison returned to Washington for the winter of 1804-5. She came no longer a novice, but a woman of the world and an acknowledged leader of society, sure of herself and her position, yet with no undue assumption or exaggerated sense of importance. Her genial nature expanded in the sunshine of prosperity, and at this time everything favored her. The administration

of Jefferson and his cabinet was no longer an experiment, but a pronounced success. The Louisiana purchase had enormously increased the prestige and political importance of the United States, and consequently the dignity of its chief officers in the eyes of the world. The people had spoken their approval in the November elections, which were so overwhelmingly Republican that Jefferson wrote to a friend that it looked as though the two parties were likely to be merged in one, and Madison stood only second to Jefferson in public estimation.

To see her husband thus universally approved, esteemed, and honored, was to this loyal wife the fulfilment of her highest ambition, and she bent all her efforts to strengthening the popularity which he had achieved. Her social life was guided by the principle which Jefferson had laid down in his inaugural, for the conduct of affairs between the American nation and foreign powers, "Honest friendship with all, entangling alliances with none." To her sister alone she indulged in confidences, and even then but sparingly.

The fourth of March came and passed. Thomas Jefferson a second time accepted the responsibility of acting as pilot of the Ship of State, and keeping her, as he himself had said,

“on the Republican tack.” The outlook was bright, and few saw the rocks and shoals ahead. In all this political hopefulness Mrs. Madison was an ardent sharer. The year which brought her so much happiness, however, brought her also a season of physical suffering, and of separation from her husband which was a still greater trial. A neglected injury to her knee threatened to develop into permanent lameness, and after several weeks of ineffectual treatment by Washington physicians, she was prevailed upon by her husband to go to Philadelphia and put herself under the care of the celebrated Dr. Philip Syng Physick.

This gentleman, whose name and profession corresponded so curiously, had won a national reputation, and was known as “The Father of American Surgery.” His portrait, done by Rembrandt Peale, shows a clean shaven face with keen eyes and a handsome, rather aristocratic profile. His treatment of Mrs. Madison was so successful that at the end of July, 1805, we find her, who till now has been very despondent over her lameness, writing more hopefully to her sister, describing herself as comfortably lodged and feeling much improved.

Dr. Physick put the knee in splints and expressed himself as confident of being able to effect a cure, but declared that it would be a

matter of time, requiring fortitude and patience on the part of the sufferer. Mrs. Madison bore this, like all her other troubles, bravely, and beguiled the tedious hours with the renewal of her old-time friendships and a constant correspondence with her husband, in which she reveals all that she is doing, saying, thinking and feeling. "I have had," she writes in one of these letters, "a lecture from S. L. on seeing too much company, and it brought to my mind the time when our Society used to control me entirely, and debar me from so many advantages and pleasures. Even now, I feel my ancient terror revive in a great degree."

The gay Washington dame was by many degrees removed from the young Quakeress who had moved demurely with downcast eyes along these monotonous streets nearly twenty years before, yet it is evident that the old surroundings brought up once more the old associations, and the terror of being disciplined by the Meeting, of which she speaks jestingly, was not without a shadow of reality.

But there were many associations of her girlish days to which her heart clung fondly, and never wavered in its loyalty amid all the excitements of new surroundings. Her old friends continued to be dear, and none the less because they were often in humble circum-



stances. During her Washington life she frequently made visits to Philadelphia, and Mr. Edward Coles, her husband's private secretary, afterward Governor of Illinois, escorted her about the town. On one occasion Mr. Coles told a friend whom he chanced to meet that he had taken Mrs. Madison to visit an old lady who kept a little shop. The shop-keeper and her visitor had adjourned for a cup of tea and a cosey chat to a room over the shop, where he had left them talking so fast that he could not get in a word.

A suggestion of the influence of old associations is to be found in the use of "thee and thou" in the letters which Mrs. Madison sends from her arm-chair at Philadelphia in 1805, to her husband on his return to Washington. There is not a word or a line in these letters which does not do her credit, and they are indeed a window into her heart showing clearly its tenderness, its forgetfulness of self and selfish suffering, its thoughtfulness for others, especially for him to whom she writes, and who is constantly in her thoughts waking or sleeping. In her dreams she sees him ill, and prays for an early letter to chase away the black vision. When the letter fails to arrive, she is so shaken as to be unable to write. On the night of his journey from Philadelphia to



Washington, when the worst perils which could have menaced him were the jolting of the public coach or the tossing of the packet, she finds herself unable to sleep, and when the watchman on his rounds announces a cloudy morning, her apprehensions of accident and cold become so great as to require the administering of an opiate by her faithful friend, Betsey Pemberton.

All this may perhaps raise a smile, but it is a kindly smile, as at the simplicity of a child, and we share her pleasure and relief when the next week brings her news of her beloved's safe arrival at Washington. "I have this moment," she writes on the thirtieth of October, "perused with delight thy letter, my darling husband, with its enclosures. To find that you love me, have my child safe, and that my mother is well, seems to comprise all my happiness."

In a few weeks Dr. Physick pronounced the knee far enough on the way to recovery to permit Mrs. Madison to rejoin her husband at the capital, and her joy was intensified by the prospect of again seeing her friend Mrs. Randolph, whose second visit to the White House was paid in the winter of 1805-6. On this occasion Mrs. Randolph brought with her her whole family consisting of five daughters and

one son, and the circle was increased by the birth in Washington of a second son, the first child born under the roof of the White House. This boy was named James Madison, and of course was very dear to James Madison's wife, who was always a welcome visitor in the Jefferson-Randolph nursery. Virginia Randolph, who became Mrs. Trist, wrote in after years, "Mrs. Madison was an intimate and much valued friend of my mother's, and her amiable, playful manners with children attracted my sisters and myself and made her a great favorite with us."

Anne Randolph, another sister, was very beautiful, with classic head, auburn hair, and delicate complexion. On one occasion she went to a ball in company with a young friend at whose mother's house she dined and dressed for the company. Mrs. Randolph went to the same ball with Mrs. Cutts, the sister of Mrs. Madison. Seeing Anne enter the room, Mrs. Randolph fixed her near-sighted eyes upon her, and then turning to Mrs. Cutts asked, "Who is that beautiful girl?" Mrs. Cutts answered in great amusement, "Why, woman, are you so unnatural a mother as not to recognize your own daughter?"

The Washington society over which Mrs. Randolph found Mrs. Madison most acceptably

presiding, was full of strange contrasts. Sir Augustus Foster, who was the English Secretary of Legation, from 1804 to 1806, has left a sprightly description of the town and its gay life. "Most of the members of Congress," he says, "keep to their lodgings; but still there are a sufficient number of them who are sociable, or whose families come to the city for a season, and there is no want of handsome ladies for the balls, especially at Georgetown; indeed, I never saw prettier girls anywhere. As there are but few of them, however, in proportion to the great number of men who frequent the places of amusement in the federal city, it is one of the most *marrying* places on the whole continent."

Complimentary as the diplomat shows himself to the outward appearance of American ladies, he finds their education defective and in consequence their conversation apt to flag. "Dancing and music," he writes, "served to eke out the time, but one got tired of hearing the same song everywhere, even when it was, —

‘Just like love is yonder rose.’

No matter how this was sung, the words alone were the man-traps; the belle of the evening was declared to be just like both, and the people looked around as if the listener was

expected to become on the instant very tender and to propose."

The chief entertainment among the men he declares to have been card-playing and gambling, a well-nigh universal habit, especially among the Southerners. Much however as he grumbles at the discomforts and provincialisms of Washington, he concludes: "In spite of its inconveniences and desolate aspect, it was, I think, the most agreeable town to reside in for any length of time."

It is evident that the society of the new capital must have reflected the crudeness of the material conditions which environed it. The social life in those early days of the capital was essentially a village life, with all the petty gossip and pettier jealousies inevitable in a community whose whole population numbered only a few thousand; but it was redeemed from the deadening self-complacency of village life which, knowing no standard but its own, counts every outsider a barbarian and thanks Heaven for its own limitations. The men and women who made up this society were, many of them, world-citizens, well acquainted with the best that Europe had to offer, yet realizing that the air here was electric with a spirit not to be found elsewhere, and in its inspiration fully compensating them for

having their lot cast as pioneers in this clearing in the western wilderness. They were actors who felt that they were playing great parts on a rude stage, and could afford to smile at the bare boards and improvised scenery.

An air of cosmopolitanism, too, was added by the foreign element. Albert Gallatin, the Swiss, had come to devote his great talents to the service of his adopted country, and the subtle d'Yrujo, the treacherous De Paistre and the insular Merry bowed and smiled, offered snuff-boxes and strove to overreach one another as gracefully as though this provincial capital had been the oldest court in Europe.

In and out among them all, cold, treacherous and fascinating, moved the figure of Aaron Burr. For a time the success of his plots appeared as easy as the descent to Avernus, but, of a sudden, the foreign governments with which he was tampering spoke out and declined the offered partnership. The King of Spain sent peremptory orders to the Marquis d'Yrujo, warning him that Spain would give no aid to Burr's plotting, and so the arch-schemer and adventurer turned his back on Washington and sought to start the ball of revolution in the West. His talents peculiarly fitted him for the part he was resolved to play, and he employed all the resources of his tact and bril-

liancy, in furthering his schemes and drawing in fresh recruits to his cause at every stop, and involving the unfortunate Blennerhassets inextricably in the web of treason.

In a few more months the secret was out, the plots, so subtly and cautiously woven, were brushed away, as it were, in a moment, and Aaron Burr was a prisoner on trial for treason. The trial at Richmond was the event of the year 1807. John Marshall presided, and the greatest lawyers of the country battled over the question, of "guilty, or not guilty of treason against the United States." Randolph of Roanoke was foreman of the jury, and throughout all those weeks, the benches of the Richmond court-house were crowded with eager listeners from every part of the broad land. The nation outside held its breath, awaiting the verdict. Jefferson and Madison had reason to feel themselves almost as much on trial before the public as the criminal himself; but there remains no word spoken or written by Mrs. Madison to indicate that she realized the gravity of the situation.

There was however one political question which had power to move Mrs. Madison and this was now in full tide of agitation. Who should be the next Republican candidate for the presidency? The two foremost rivals were



James Madison and James Monroe. Jefferson, whose word was law to the party, declared that he could not as between two old and dear friends express a preference, but those who knew him best did not doubt that his choice lay with Madison.

There was, however, a strong anti-Madison party including many men of influence, such as Smith of Maryland, Clay of Pennsylvania, and George Clinton, Jr. of New York. Seventeen of those in opposition to Madison, with John Randolph at their head, drew up a formal protest which appeared in March, 1808. In this the objectors said : —

“We are, perhaps, on the eve of a war with one of the greatest powers of Europe. In such a crisis, if unanimity in the choice of a president is necessary, that choice should be directed to a man eminently calculated by his tried energy and talents to conduct the nation with firmness and wisdom through the perils which surround it; a man who had not, in the hour of terror and persecution, deserted his post and sought in obscurity and retirement a shelter from the political tempest; to a man not suspected of undue partiality or enmity to either of the belligerent powers; to a man who had not forfeited his claim to public confidence by recommending a shameful bargain with the unprincipled speculators of the Yazoo companies, — a dishonorable compact with fraud and corruption.



“Is James Madison such a man? We ask for energy, and we are told of his moderation; we ask for talent, and the reply is his unassuming merit; we ask what were his services in the cause of Public Liberty, and we are directed to the pages of the ‘Federalist.’ ”

This last thrust, with its hint of Madison’s apostasy from the cause which the “Federalist” had represented, bears the unmistakable impress of John Randolph, whose bitterness knew no bounds, and who was determined to stop at nothing to prevent the nomination of a man whom he cordially detested. A letter written by him two years earlier from Bizarre and addressed to Monroe, goes to even greater length, and might tempt a cynic to smile at finding this vehement exponent of southern chivalry ready to invade the domestic circle and strike at a political opponent through an attack on his wife.

After many denunciations of the already fore-shadowed nomination of Madison he writes: —

“They [the old Republicans] are moreover determined not to have a Yazoo President, if they can avoid it, nor one who has mixed in the intrigues of the last three or four years at Washington. There is another consideration, which I know not

how to touch. You, my dear sir, cannot be ignorant, although of all mankind you perhaps have the least cause to know it, how deeply the respectability of any character may be impaired by an unfortunate matrimonial connection. I can pursue this subject no further. It is at once too delicate and too mortifying. Before the decision is ultimately made, I hope to have the pleasure of communicating with you in person."

Neither public opposition nor private malevolence however could prevail against Madison, and unless Monroe was one of those who "demen gladly to the badder end," these dark insinuations could only have reacted upon the writer. In spite of Randolph's invective and innuendo; in spite of the most strenuous efforts of the Federalists and the desertion of many Republicans, when the electoral votes were counted in the presence of Congress on a February morning in 1809, James Madison was declared elected President of the United States with George Clinton as Vice-President.

The year 1807 brought a great grief to Mrs. Madison in the death of her mother, who was staying at the time with her daughter Mary, Mrs. Jackson. The two letters which follow, written by Mrs. Jackson's husband to Madison, give an account of her mother's last hours:—

## WIFE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

CLARKSBURG, Sunday Ev<sup>g</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> October, 1807.

MY DEAR FRIEND, -- It is with grief unutterable I communicate to you the painful intelligence that ere you receive this our beloved & Much respected friend Mr<sup>s</sup> Payne will be no more. She is now while I write this dying away — her attack has been sudden, unexpected, & severe — on Wednesday evening she had made her little round to a few of our neighbors & returned home in unusually good health & spirits. Mr<sup>s</sup> Jackson appeared to be recovering, & that with the prospect of soon joining you all seemed to increase them — At the usual hour she went to Bed and about three o'clock A. M. I was informed by a servant that she was extremely ill. I hastened to her chamber & enquired what was the Matter, she answered with a voice broken & much altered that a violent stroke of the dead Palsy had deprived her entirely of the use of her left side. It extends to her head & neck. In a few Minutes the Doctor arrived. she repeated to him the extent of the attack & that it would be fatal — I supported her for a short time in my arms, & found that her neck was stiffened by the attack, & that she had no use of any part of her body — In the space of an hour she became speechless & fell into a state of insensibility which has continued without intermission ever since — she appears to be without pain & has weakened gradually — The application of bleeding, blisters, rubbing, &c. have

*DOLLY MADISON*

not produced the smallest effect — The effect of this attack upon Mr<sup>s</sup> Jackson has been & still is very alarming — Heaven only knows what will be the result.

Farewell — Yours truly,  
J. G. JACKSON.

CLARKSBURG, October 25<sup>th</sup>, 1807.

MY DEAR SIR, — My letter by the last Post informed you that our beloved Friend, Mr<sup>s</sup> Payne, was ill beyond the reach of recovery — Alas! my prediction was too fatally verified, she continued without any alteration except an increased debility until Wednesday evening last when she expired — The shock which her sickness & death produced upon the health & spirits of my poor sick wife has been alarming in the extreme — I have watched over her incessantly ever since, oftentimes with the expectation that the hour which was closing on us would survive her — & altho I have occasionally indulged the hope that in a few weeks she would be well enough to set off in a close light waggon which I have procured for her & that a change of situation would aid me in restoring her to health, still my dear Friend, my hand trembles when I write you, I fear that the hope is illusive — last night and to day she has been worse than for several days past, her fever & Chills have been severe in the extreme & her stomach so disordered as to baffle all the medical skill this Country can

*WIFE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE*

afford — But I will yet hope that my cup of misery  
is almost exhausted & tho' shorn indeed, still that  
God will temper the wind to the shorn Lamb —

Farewell, my dear friend,

J. G. JACKSON.

## VII

### IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

THE fourth of March, in the year 1809, witnessed the inauguration of James Madison as President of the United States. The day found all the nation in a state of cheerfulness, if not of enthusiasm. The Jeffersonians were glad because Jefferson's most intimate friend and disciple was to succeed him; the Federalists were glad because, at least, the "Arch-Fiend of Democracy" was out of office; and the whole people were glad at the promised lifting of the hateful embargo which was paralyzing commerce and pauperizing merchants and sailors alike.

One class, however, resented and deplored the continuance of the power of the Democrats, as the followers of Jefferson were now coming to be called. All the barbers were Federalists, owing, it was said, to the fact that those leaders wore powder and long queues which required dressing by the barbers, while the Democrats wore short hair or small queues tied carelessly

with a ribbon. On the nomination of Madison, a barber burst out: "The country is doomed; what presidents we might have, sir! Just look at Dagget, of Connecticut, or Stockton, of New Jersey! What queues they have got, sir! — as big as your wrist and powdered every day, sir, like the real gentlemen they are. Such men, sir, would confer dignity upon the chief magistracy; but this little Jim Madison, with a queue no bigger than a pipe-stem! Sir, it is enough to make a man forswear his country." As the inauguration ball would necessitate an unusual amount of hair-dressing, however, even the barbers were in good humor on this day, and added their plaudits to those of the crowds who thronged the streets of the capital.

The festivities of celebration everywhere marked the public joy. Salutes of cannon from Fort Warburton and the Navy Yard ushered in the dawn. Troops of militia gathered early at Georgetown and Alexandria, and marched to Washington to escort Mr. Madison to the Capitol. Ten thousand people gathered along the way to see the procession, which everywhere was greeted with great hurrahing and throwing up of hats and waving of handkerchiefs.

Arrived at the Capitol, Madison descended from his carriage and entered the Hall of Representatives, where, until the inaugura-



tion of Monroe, the newly elected president took the oath of office. Madison was attended by the Attorney-General and other cabinet officers. One who saw him describes him as looking unusually well, the excitement of the occasion lending color to his pale student face, and dignity to his small, slender figure. He was dressed in a suit of clothes wholly of American manufacture, made of the wool from merino sheep bred and reared in this country. His coat was from the manufactory of Colonel Humphreys, and his waistcoat and small-clothes from that of Chancellor Livingston, both being gifts offered in token of respect by those gentlemen. At twelve o'clock, with marked dignity and composure of manner, he took the oath of office, administered by Chief-Justice Marshall and, amid deafening cheers, as President of the United States began his inaugural address.

When the inaugural ceremonies were ended, Madison reviewed the infantry drawn up to receive him, and then, escorted by cavalry, returned to his home, where Mrs. Madison's hospitality had prepared an abundance of good cheer to be set before the crowds who called to pay their respects to the new chief magistrate. The festivities of the day ended with a brilliant inauguration ball, held at Long's Hotel. In an old number of a journal of Portland, Maine,

I find a glowing description of the glories of this ball, written by a correspondent who took part in its gayeties and sent a detailed account to be read by his fellow-townsmen in that then remote corner of the country. "Upwards of four hundred persons," he says, "graced the scene, which was not a little enlivened by the handsome display of female fashion and beauty." The toilets, according to the standards of the day, were sumptuous; and, so far had Washington progressed toward the dignity of a metropolis, that its belles no longer found it necessary to go to Philadelphia for their finery.

In the advertising columns of the daily papers at this time Mrs. Sweeney informs the ladies of Washington that she has again commenced the "Millinery & Mantua Making business," and Mrs. Walker "acquaints the Ladies of the City of Washington and its vicinity, that on Monday morning, in the Front Room of Mr. Peltz's house near the Centre Market, Pennsylvania Avenue, she opened and offers for sale a Fresh and Elegant assortment of Fashionable silk velvets, Turbans, Pelices, Great-Coats, &c."

The beautiful women who gathered at Long's Hotel to welcome the advent of the new administration with music and dancing, were

arrayed in all the gorgeousness of this newly imported "fresh and elegant assortment," but none were so splendid as the wife of the President.

Shade of John Payne, what would you have said, had you walked in, clad in your sober suit of Quaker gray, and seen in the very centre of this worldly company your daughter Dorothy attired in a robe of yellow velvet, her bare neck and arms hung with pearls, and her head nodding beneath a Paris turban with a bird-of-paradise plume! Perchance with deeper insight than marked your earthly vision, you might have looked beneath all these frivolous trappings and found your daughter's heart still as loyal, true and loving as when it beat beneath the lawn kerchief folded above the gown of ashen gray, and so have been satisfied.

This inauguration-ball was indeed a brilliant assemblage, with the gay dresses of the ladies and the no less gay uniforms of the different legations. A correspondent of the Baltimore "Whig," in describing the scene, takes occasion at the same time to satisfy an old grudge against Robert Goodloe Harper, who shone at Washington in the double capacity of politician and man of fashion. "Goody," says the "Whig" correspondent, "came to the Inauguration Ball,—I swear it, if you doubt me!

He was perfumed like a Milliner and a huge knot of black ribbon nodded on each shoe. A wag present remarked that Goody wore Cockades in his shoes to mark the seat of his soldiership ever since Wilkinson invited him to the field. What a world it is!" Such were the amenities of journalism at the beginning of the century.

No one among the distinguished figures who surrounded the President and Mrs. Madison was so conspicuous as the tall form of Jefferson. Remembering, perhaps, his own feelings at the conduct of his predecessor, John Adams, in leaving Washington abruptly, apparently to avoid witnessing the inauguration of the new president, Jefferson seemed determined to do all in his power to lend brilliancy to those opening scenes of Madison's administration. Never had he appeared more genial, more ready-witted, or more light-hearted than at Mrs. Madison's first reception. Full of jest, and repartee, he shed the spirit of gayety in a shining circle about him. As the ladies pressed near him, a friend whispered jestingly; "You see they *will* follow you." "That is as it should be," answered Jefferson, "since I am too old to follow them. I remember," he added, "when Dr. Franklin's friends were taking leave of him in France, the ladies

almost smothered him with embraces. On his introducing me to them as his successor, I told them that among the rest of his privileges, I wished he would transfer this one to me. But he answered: 'No, no; you are too young a man.' " When the ex-President had finished, a young lady who stood near him suggested that that invidious bar no longer existed. What response he made is not recorded; but when some one commented on the contrast which his gayety presented to the exhaustion and care-worn aspect of the newly installed president, Jefferson responded: "Can you wonder at it? My shoulders have just been freed from a heavy burden; his just laden with it."

Jefferson did indeed seem to feel all the exhilaration of a released school-boy at his escape from the cares of office which had pressed with increasing weight throughout the past eight years. As soon as the inaugural festivities were ended he made ready for departure to Monticello. His household goods he sent ahead in a wagon train drawn by six mules and four horses, the loads surmounted by eleven black servants, forming as may be imagined a striking procession. Desirous, it may be, of avoiding the attention such a cortege was sure to attract, the master drove off from Washington in a phaeton attended by a single

servant, and soon exchanged the carriage for the saddle.

A few days later he writes to the Madisons :  
“ I had a very fatiguing journey, having found the roads exceedingly bad. The last three days I found it better to be on horseback, and travelled eight hours in as disagreeable a snow-storm as I ever saw.” His Virginia estate was by no means at its loveliest in that raw, bleak March weather, and he reported his disappointment at finding no oats or tobacco sown and little done in the garden, no vegetation visible but the red-maple, weeping-willow, and lilac.

The Federalist papers, which had pelted him with epithets and lampoons, fired parting shots after his retreating form as it disappeared from public life. One of these poetic compositions was a parody, and ran thus :—

“ O ! whither, I pray is our Highland Daddy bound?  
O ! whither, I pray, is our Highland Daddy bound?  
He's bound to his plantation with fifty thousand pound,  
With a gun-boat embargoed to plough his native ground.  
Oh ! what will he do with his philosophic fogs?  
Oh ! what will he do with his philosophic fogs?  
He'll discover more salt-mountains — He'll breed more  
horned frogs.  
He'll improve his whirling chair and call wood-chucks prairie-  
dogs.”

With the departure of Jefferson the burden of office fell for the first time wholly upon Madi-



son's shoulders, and it is little wonder that he was oppressed by the difficulty of worthily filling the position hallowed and dignified by the memories of Washington, Adams, and Jefferson. It was no less serious a matter for Dolly Madison to feel devolving upon herself the responsibility of living up to the standards set by Martha Washington and Abigail Adams.

One of Mrs. Madison's predecessors was fully impressed by the solemnity of the situation. With somewhat irritating self-complacency Mrs. Adams writes to her daughter in June of this year: "With respect to Mrs. Madison's influence it *ought to be* [the italics are my own] such as Solomon describes his virtuous woman's to be,—one who should do him good and not evil all the days of her life. So that the heart of her husband may safely trust in her. I believe I may say with safety that her predecessors left her no evil example." The last sentence recalls the words of the Parisian lady who naïvely remarked to Dr. Franklin: "*Je ne trouve que moi qui a toujours raison.*"

Perhaps when Mrs. Adams found her son appointed Minister to St. Petersburg she took a more genial view of Dolly Madison's influence, and would have been willing to substitute "will be" for that chilly and cautious "ought to be."

It must be admitted that under Mrs. Madi-



son's influence, life at the White House lost something of its simplicity. Dress grew gayer, entertainments more elaborate, and when the President's wife took the air it was in a chariot drawn by four horses, — a chariot built by Fielding of Philadelphia at a cost of fifteen hundred dollars. The holding of levees and weekly dinner-parties at the White House, with all the inevitable household cares, proved a serious strain on Mrs. Madison's health and strength, but after all, as Monroe once observed when asked if he were not completely worn out by the weary hours of standing and hand-shaking at his receptions, "a little flattery will support one through a great deal of fatigue."

In the first year of Mrs. Madison's occupancy of the White House, Congress appropriated the modest sum of five thousand dollars for the further furnishing and decoration of the mansion. How the money was expended is shown by the accounts of Latrobe, the superintendent of public buildings : —

*Account of B. Henry Latrobe, with the Furniture of the President's house, May 29th, 1809.*

	D <sup>r</sup>
To this Sum paid to him on account	
by a Warrant on the Treasury	\$5,000,—

# DOLLY MADISON

Per Contra	C <sup>r</sup>
By this Sum p <sup>d</sup> Louis Deblois for two Mirrors & expenses	1.060.—
By d <sup>o</sup> ——— d <sup>o</sup> ——— to settle small acct <sup>s</sup> —	550.—
Mem: This sum has been nearly expended for articles of household use & repairs, and is to be accounted for by M <sup>r</sup> Deblois.	
By d <sup>o</sup> ——— Louis Mark of New York for Table Linnen, & Looking Glass, on acc <sup>t</sup>	1.225. —
By d <sup>o</sup> ——— Paul S. Brown for China,	556.15
By d <sup>o</sup> ——— Charles Bird, for Knives, forks bottle stands, Waiters, And- irons, &c	220.90
By d <sup>o</sup> ——— John Cox, for sundries (remittance to Peter Harvie Ph <sup>a</sup> )	840.70
By d <sup>o</sup> ——— Geo. Blake for a Guitar	28.00
By d <sup>o</sup> ——— Andrew Hazlehurst for a Pianoforte	458.00
By Commission @ 2 p Cent	100.—
	<hr/> \$5.038.75

Latrobe reports a further expenditure of one thousand dollars for the curtains, chairs, and sofas of the drawing-room. A very magnificent apartment this state drawing-room of Mrs. Dolly Madison was considered in those days. It was upholstered in yellow satin with stiff sofas and

high-backed chairs. Its long windows were hung with damask formed into valances and festoons. A rod running around the top of the room held another fall of the brocade, and the fire-board beneath the mantel repeated the same yellow damask arranged in the fluted pattern known as "a rising sun." No wonder all this magnificence taxed Latrobe's allowance from Congress. Despite the yellow satin upholstery and the great mirrors, however, the White-House was still but scantily furnished, and the wide, bare halls echoed drearily to every passing footstep.

The city without, like the White House within, had not greatly changed in its material features from its unfinished state in the days when Mrs. Adams bewailed its primitive condition. The foreigner still wrote of it as a spoiled wilderness, resembling nothing so much as Hampton Heath, and told tales of having started a covey of partridges within a hundred yards of the Capitol. The pavements of sidewalks still ended abruptly on the edge of sloughs through which the pedestrian must flounder above his shoe-tops, and the Abbé Corr  a's jesting title, given some years later, of "The City of Magnificent Distances," happily set forth the only claim to magnificence which the capital possessed.

Yet the society was steadily advancing in numbers, importance, and air of cosmopolitanism. Mrs. Madison was surrounded in these early days of her husband's administration by a group of men and women whose fame has survived for well-nigh a century, and the universal and sincere regard with which they regarded her would in itself constitute a strong claim for her own distinction. Nearest to her naturally stood Madison's official family, George Clinton of New York, Eustis of Massachusetts, Gallatin the Swiss, with his American wife, Paul Hamilton, and Colonel Monroe, the Secretary of State.

James Monroe, the man who stood upon the stepping-stone to the presidency, was of "the Virginia dynasty;" of tall figure, dressed in the old style, with small-clothes, silk hose, knee-buckles and pumps. His brow was somewhat retreating and unimpressive, but his eye so clear and straightforward that it justified Jefferson's remark that Monroe was so honest that if you turned his soul inside out there would not be a spot on it. Inseparable from the Secretary of State was his wife, formerly a Miss Kortwright, famous as a New York beauty in the latter days of the Revolution, and known afterward in Paris as "*la belle Americaine*."

The South furnished its full share of con-

spicuous figures to Washington society. John Marshall towered above all. John Randolph was there with his high-pitched voice, his clean-shaven, "young-old" face and sarcastic mouth. Henry Clay, from Mrs. Madison's own Hanover County, once "The Mill-boy of the Slashes," now high in the councils of state, retained all his old-time simplicity. His face was peculiar and striking, with sharp eyes twinkling under overhanging eyebrows, with long, straight hair and deep lines drawn about the lips and nostrils. Calhoun, too, came in 1811 to take part in Congressional affairs, and was one of the most noticeable figures, his great head loaded down with a weight of shaggy, ragged locks. His wife was among the intimate friends of Mrs. Madison's circle, as was also the brilliant Mrs. Van Ness, whose entertainments were among the leading social events of Washington in those days.

The father of Mrs. Van Ness was David Burns, who had owned a tract of land in the heart of the city when it was surveyed for the future capital. This ground is described in the original patent of 1661 as "The Widow's Mite, lyeing on the east side of the Anacostin River, on the north side of a branch or inlett in the said river called Tyber."

Shrewd Davy early perceived the value of his

land, and was very stiff in refusing to part with it. Washington strove to deal with him, but the old Scotchman, so tradition says, answered testily ; “ I suppose you think people here are going to take your grist for pure grain ; but,” he added with crushing sarcasm, “ what would *you* have been if you had n’t married the widow Custis ? ” The right of eminent domain, however, forced even stubborn David Burns to give up his land, but not till he had obtained a price which made his daughter one of the greatest heiresses of the country. Her husband, Mr. John P. Van Ness, was a prominent citizen of Washington, and their house a centre of social gayety. Mrs. Van Ness too was a leader of the city charities, as well of the society, and was largely instrumental in founding the City Orphan Asylum, in which Mrs. Madison was first directress.

To this asylum Mrs. Madison contributed not only the gifts of “ twenty dollars and a cow,” set down to her credit in the books of the institution, but a sympathy and devotion quite beyond calculation, and an amount of time which could only have been taken from her busy life at the cost of much real self-sacrifice. She took upon herself the heavy work of cutting out the clothing for the orphans. Mrs. Lee, in after years, asked her how she could submit to

its fatigues, and how she endured the great welts raised by the heavy shears upon the white hands which were among her chief beauties. "Oh!" exclaimed Mrs. Madison, "it was delicious work; I never enjoyed anything as much."

In Mrs. Madison's occupations, charitable, domestic, and social, she was ably assisted by her two sisters, Lucy and Anna, both of whom were at this time living in Washington, — Mrs. Cutts settled there by her husband's public duties, and Mrs. Washington (Lucy Payne) having made her home with Mrs. Madison after the death of her husband. The trio of sisters attracted much attention and admiration. Washington Irving, in a letter to his friend Brevoort, written from the capital, and dated the thirteenth of January, 1811, gives an entertaining description of his first meeting with them, and of his first experience of Washington society.

"I arrived at the Inn about dusk," he says, "and understanding that Mrs. Madison was to have her levee or drawing-room that very evening, I swore by all the gods I would be there. But how? was the question. I had got away down into Georgetown, and the persons to whom my letters of introduction were directed lived all upon Capitol Hill about three miles off, while the President's house



was exactly half way. Here was a non-plus enough to startle any man of less enterprising spirit; but I had sworn to be there, and I determined to keep my oath, and like Caleb Quotem ‘have a place at the Review.’ So I mounted with a stout heart to my room; resolved to put on my pease-blossoms and silk stockings, gird up my loins and sally forth on my expedition, and like a vagabond knight-errant trust to Providence for success and whole bones.

“Just as I descended from my attic full of this valorous spirit I was met by my landlord, with whom and the head waiter, by the bye, I had held a private cabinet council on the subject. Bully Rook informed me that there was a party of gentlemen just going from the house, one of whom, Mr. Fontaine Maury of New York, had offered his services to introduce me to ‘the Sublime Porte.’ I cut one of my best opera flourishes, skipped into the dressing-room, popped my head into the hands of a sanguinary Jacobinical barber who carried havoc and desolation into the lower regions of my face; mowed down all the beard on one of my cheeks and laid the other in blood like a conquered province; and, thus, like a second Banquo, with ‘twenty mortal murthers on my head;’ in a few minutes I emerged from dirt and darkness into the blazing splendor of Mrs. Madison’s drawing-room.

“Here I was most graciously received; found a crowded collection of great and little men, of

ugly old women and beautiful young ones, and in ten minutes was hand and glove with half the people in the assemblage.

“Mrs. Madison is a fine, portly, buxom dame, who has a smile and a pleasant word for everybody. Her sisters, Mrs. Cutts and Mrs. Washington, are like the two Merry Wives of Windsor; but as to Jemmy Madison — Ah! poor Jemmy! — he is but a withered little apple-John.”

A month or so later Irving writes to his brother that he does not indulge any very sanguine hopes of securing the diplomatic appointment in search of which he had come to Washington, as he finds that the matter is generally left to the minister, in this case a stranger to him. But that he still cherished some hope is shown by a subsequent paragraph: “The President on its being mentioned to him,” Irving writes, “said some very handsome things of me, and I make no doubt will express a wish in my favor on the subject, more especially as Mrs. Madison is a sworn friend of mine, and indeed all the ladies of the household and myself are great cronies.” It is pleasant to think of Mrs. Madison thus befriending the young aspirant destined to become the first American man-of-letters worthy to bear the name. Her influence, however, did not apparently suffice to secure the ap-

pointment, as he had doubtless hoped that it might, since her political power was rated very high in her day and generation.

Even after the lapse of many years, in the recently published letters of James G. Blaine, that shrewd observer, familiar with all the traditions of Washington, writes of Mrs. Madison as a political force. In the course of a series of comments on the influence exerted by the wives of the different presidents, he says: "Mrs. Madison saved the administration of her husband, held him back from the extremes of Jeffersonism, and enabled him to escape from the terrible dilemma of the war of '12. But for her, De Witt Clinton would have been chosen president in 1812." Whether the facts bear out quite so large a claim, may be questioned, but there is little doubt that many appointments were attributed to her intercession, and a study of her character makes it probable that, however little she may have desired to mingle in general political affairs, she was glad when the opportunity offered to be of service to her friends, and now and then gave them pieces of timely and serviceable advice.

Much flotsam and jetsam of anecdote have gathered about the figure of Mrs. Madison while mistress of the White House. Most of

them are trivial; some of them apocryphal, but of value as showing at least the popular sentiment, and the desire to preserve the records of her warmth and kindness of heart.

One story represents two old ladies from the country, escorted by a friend of Mrs. Madison's to the White House where the family were still at breakfast. To the surprise of the rural visitors, the woman they had come to see appeared in a stuff dress of dark gray, protected by a large housewifely white apron, and with a linen kerchief pinned about her neck. Her simplicity of manner and attire completely swept away their awe, and before departing one of them found courage to exclaim: "Perhaps you would n't mind if I kissed you, — just to tell the folks about."

On a subsequent occasion at one of her levees, her attention was drawn to another rustic visitor, a youth who was evidently suffering all the torments of embarrassment. He had at last ventured to help himself to a cup of coffee when Mrs. Madison walked up and addressed him. In the surprise of the moment the lad dropped the saucer and strove to crowd the cup into his pocket. But his tactful hostess took no notice of the accident except to observe that in such a crowd no one could avoid being jostled, and straightway turned the conversa-

tion to the boy's family, and ended by sending her regards to his excellent mother and bidding the servant bring another cup of coffee.

A story of similar import is related by William C. Preston in his unpublished journal. He describes his going as a youth to the White House to pay his respects to the President and Mrs. Madison. The drawing-room when he entered was ablaze with brilliant uniforms and gorgeous toilettes made doubly dazzling by the reflection of many mirrors. In the centre he saw Mrs. Madison, a tall, portly, elegant lady; with a turban on her head and a snuff-box in her hand. "She advanced straight towards me," he writes, "and extending her left hand said: 'Are you William Campbell Preston, the son of my old friend and most beloved kinswoman, Sally Campbell? Sit down, my son, for you are my son, and I am the first person who ever saw you in this world.'" Turning then with a graciousness which charmed the young man, she introduced him to the circle of young girls about her, giving some special clue to each, and ending with "your kinswoman, Sally Coles." Who can estimate the effect of such trifling episodes as these in making an administration popular perhaps even to the extent quoted above of saving it!

Her notions of Virginia hospitality Mrs. Madison never abandoned throughout her stay in Washington. She counted the nation's guests her guests, and she devoted all her time and energy to ministering to the comfort and enjoyment of those about her, and in particular of strangers and foreigners. Jackson, the British Minister at the time, wrote home of his amusement when during his first conference with President Madison a negro-servant knocked at the door and brought in a tray bountifully laden with punch and seed-cake. There is no record that the English diplomat declined the viands, however little he appreciated the spirit which prompted the sending of them.

The weariness inevitably resulting from such ceaseless activity as Mrs. Madison's made her very glad when, in the summer of 1811, the President found himself able to take a few weeks of rest in the bracing air of Montpelier.

A letter sent to Mr. Madison on the occasion of their departure is interesting as affording an illustration of the difficulties with which Mrs. Madison contended in her efforts to please every one and give offence to none:—

Monday Evening, Aug. — 1811.

SIR, — To prevent any Suspicion of a deficiency in respect to you and your Lady whom we have



never ceased to more than respect & esteem — I am unwilling to permit you to depart without expressing our sincere regret that when your Departure was made known to all our Friends by her farewell visit to them, and they were thereby enabled to pay their parting respects, we remained ignorant thereof, and were consequently precluded from joining in so affectionate a visit. Had it been merely accident, we should not in apologizing for an apparent want of attention have had to mingle with our regrets any of those feelings which afflict while they affect: — but I have long had to lament a marked distance and coldness towards me, for which I cannot account, and am the more affected by it, because we once enjoyed the happiness of being considered as among your Friends. It would have been kind to have mentioned any cause of dissatisfaction rather than wound us by exhibiting to the world our misfortune in the loss of your friendship & esteem. —

Farewell, & may the Almighty bless you & yours. —

WILLIAM THORNTON.

To the President of the United States.

The first of October found Mr. and Mrs. Madison again in Washington refreshed and reinvigorated, though the citizens of the capital were suffering from a low fever resulting from the unfinished condition of a canal.

In the autumn of this year (1811) the poet-



politician, Joel Barlow, author of *The Hasty Pudding* and *Revolutionary* pamphlets, was sent abroad as Minister to France. Barlow had hoped for a still higher office. In a letter written two years earlier, he congratulates the President on his election, and offers his views on the conduct of the government. He confesses that he had expected the position of Secretary of State, and observes that it was his extreme solicitude for the good of his country which led him to desire the place.

Apparently Madison differed with him as to the best interests of the country, for it was not until 1811 that he received any appointment, and then to a foreign embassy. This is one of the appointments which may, perhaps, be traced to Mrs. Madison's influence, as the Barlows were among her most intimate friends, and during the whole term of their residence abroad, which was ended by the sudden death of Barlow, near Krakow in Poland, in 1812, they kept up a brisk correspondence with her.

I deprecate the contempt of the advanced woman when I confess, as I am compelled to do, that the theme of these mutual letters even to and from Paris, in the days pulsating with those Napoleonic conquests and disasters which were shaking Europe to its centre, was chiefly

“cloaths.” “Our girls,” said Barlow to Mrs. Madison, “will write you about Courts and fashion and finery.” His wife, in another letter in which she urges Mrs. Madison’s sister Lucy to come over to Paris for the winter, adds: “I want to send you some pretty things which are the high style here, gold and silver with silk done on mull. Mr. Lee has sent you so much of every kind of dress, and it is so difficult to send to the post and then to get any one to take charge of valuable things, that I shall send nothing.”

Mrs. Madison in turn writes to Mrs. Barlow, in the spring of 1812, mentioning incidentally that the embargo has been laid on, and that war is imminent, that the Vice-President is thought to be dying, and that there are rumors that Napoleon has seized the “Hornet.” Having disposed of these trifling items her interest kindles to the real subject of her letter, the ribbons and flowers and gowns recently received, which she pronounces enchanting; but fears she will never be able to order any more, as the duties on these amounted to two thousand dollars.

Part of this Parisian finery, no doubt, found its way into the wedding outfit of Mrs. Lucy Washington, who was married in March of this year to Judge Todd, of the Supreme Court,

a widower with several children. He was much older than herself; but the choice was commended by the Madisons who had found disparity of age no barrier to domestic happiness, and who knew Judge Todd to be a man of sound character and marked ability.

Mrs. Madison had now, in 1812, reached her forty-fourth year, but she held her youthful appearance still, not perhaps without artificial aid, for one of her warmest admirers admitted that she used rouge and powder, but claimed that it was from no motives of vanity, but only to give pleasure to those who looked at her. However this may be, her good spirits and sweet temper were at least her own, and abode with her to the end.

Her son, Payne Todd, was now a young man grown. He had been at school in Baltimore, and there had been a project of sending him to Princeton, but, apparently, he had shown little desire for a college education, or, indeed, any inclination for scholarly pursuits. His mother's heart, however, was still full of schemes for his future, and of hopes for his usefulness and prominence. It is seldom given to mortals to enjoy such fulness of satisfaction as was Mrs. Madison's at this period. She possessed to the full the three gifts which have been declared requisite to a happy life: She had much to do,

## *DOLLY MADISON*

much to love, and much to hope for; but clouds and gloom were gathering thick and fast around her country and her husband, and for the next three years, Dolly Madison was destined to walk in their shadow.

## VIII

### WAR CLOUDS

ON a June afternoon in the year 1812, the "National Intelligencer" of Washington City, made the announcement that war had been declared by the United States against Great Britain. The night mail bore copies of the paper far and wide, and the next day knots of people gathered at every tavern and post-office along the routes to discuss the political situation. On the morning of June twentieth the news reached New York, and was confirmed by a bulletin issued from a fort off the Battery, now Castle Garden. In the broad, tranquil harbor lay a fleet of merchant vessels in the idleness enforced by the new embargo, proclaimed again in the spring of this year. Over the tops of their masts hung tar-barrels, used to protect the wood from rotting, and known familiarly and derisively as "Madison's night-caps." But among these merchant-men, listlessly tossing on the summer tide or moored

to their wharves, was a group of American warships, full of life and eager preparation.

On Sunday the twenty-first of June the strongest naval force which the country could muster, a squadron consisting of four ships, the President, the Congress, the Hornet, and the Argus, heaved anchor, and with the United States flag flying at the mast-head of every vessel, put out to sea in search of British cruisers. War had begun.

*War !* For the first time in her life Dolly Madison was now to learn the meaning of the word. As a little child she had, it is true, lived in an invaded country, but the raiders had passed by at a distance, and the echoes of the guns at Williamsburg and Yorktown were faint and far from the peaceful Hanover County plantation, and youth recked little of everything that passes beyond the grasp of its touch and sight and hearing. In the twenty-nine years of peace which had followed the close of the Revolution, she like the rest of the world had had time to forget, and the peace and prosperity of the nation had come to be taken for granted and as a matter of course. Mighty changes these twenty-nine years had wrought. The steamboat had appeared, and the press had grown into an enormous power. The population of the country had nearly

doubled. The area of its territory (thanks to the Louisiana purchase) had more than doubled.

The United States possessed at this time in comparison with Revolutionary days a great advantage for war-making in its compacted nationality, and its centralized government; but as a counterbalancing disadvantage, the popular sympathy was by no means so deeply stirred as in the earlier contest, and there was a powerful party which persisted in regarding this as a war, not of the nation, but of a faction which had put a halter round the neck of the President and dragged him into the declaration of hostilities against his better judgment and almost against his will.

There was, it is true, throughout the country, a very wide-spread indignation against the conduct of England. The right of search claimed and exercised by the captains of British men-of-war, who stopped American vessels upon the high seas, and took from their crews any sailors whom they chose to consider British seamen, was highly exasperating to American pride; and the efforts of England to restrain American commerce with France during the Napoleonic wars, touched the pocket, as well as the pride of the new nation. The British exactions and harassments, culminating in the



famous Orders in Council, at length roused so hot an opposition, that the government of the United States was drawn on to a declaration of war, and the people took up the war-cry of "Free trade and sailors' rights!"

But the government had enemies within its borders as well as without. The Federalists, smarting under their years of defeat, now saw their opportunity to attack their political opponents. The war was called "Madison's War." It was assailed as unwise, unnecessary, and ill-timed. In short, all the floods of Federalist bitterness were let loose on poor Madison's devoted head, and Mrs. Madison must often have been tempted to exclaim with the unfortunate French queen: "Why do they hate us so?"

Defeat and victory alike afforded occasion for attacks on the administration. On the receipt of the news of Hull's disgraceful surrender at Detroit, the papers were furious, not only at Hull's treachery and cowardice, but at the incompetence of Madison, Eustis, and Dearborn. On the announcement of the splendid victories gained in the fights between the *Wasp* and the *Frolic*; the *Hornet* and the *Peacock*: the captures of the *Alert* the *Guerrière* and *Macedonian*, the enemies of Madison hurrahed for American seamanship and valor,

and cursed the fortune of such men in being governed by a set of forcible feebls, like Madison and his cabinet.

The persistency with which the opposition press belittled victories and exaggerated defeats, attributed evil motives and maligned character, went beyond even the days in Jefferson's administration, when in his wrath the President declared that nothing could be believed that was found in the pages of a newspaper, since truth itself became suspicious from such a polluted vehicle. "The man," he said, "who never looks into a newspaper is better informed than he who reads them, inasmuch as he who knows nothing is nearer to truth than he whose mind is filled with falsehood and errors."

Through all this strife which raged almost as hotly within as without the borders of the country, Mrs. Madison proved herself a true helpmeet to her anxious and harassed husband. Bearing herself with her wonted equanimity, she relieved him as far as possible from all the social burdens which weigh heavily upon the time and strength of a busy man, especially of one with so little reserve of strength as Madison. Her doors were open to men of all parties and shades of opinion, and within her walls all animosities were dropped, or at

least held in abeyance. For the days of defeat she had a steady and cheerful courage which inspired the doubtful with the assurance of ultimate success and at the news of victory her face was an illumination.

After the capture of the Macedonian, Lieutenant Hamilton, son of Paul Hamilton, Secretary of the Navy, was sent on to Washington bearing the flag of the conquered vessel as a trophy. On his arrival at the city he was informed that a brilliant naval ball was being held at Tomlinson's Hotel in celebration of the victories over the *Alert* and the *Guerriere*. Lieutenant Hamilton hastened to the scene of festivities, where he found the President, the officers of the cabinet, and other distinguished guests making merry in the ball-room which was decorated with the flags of the two conquered vessels. Hamilton entered amid such an excitement that it nearly raised a panic, bearing a third, which, as the legend runs, he laid with great ceremony at the feet of Mrs. Madison.

A modern historian strives to rob us of this pretty story of the flag laid at Mrs. Madison's feet and to fling it into the dust-heap of falsehood together with Tell's apple and Washington's hatchet; but my belief that this, or something very much like it, did take place is

strong, and is confirmed by an odd little bit of circumstantial evidence which is to be found in a letter from a lady of the period, full of gossip and incident and speaking very freely of the leaders of Washington society. This writer declares that almost all the ladies, including Mrs. Monroe (who being a grandmother should be willing to grow old), make free use of rouge and pearl-powder: "Mrs. Madison," she adds, "is said to rouge; but not evident to my eyes, and I do not think it is true, as I am well assured I saw her color come and go at the naval ball when the Macedonian flag was presented to her by young Hamilton." Such testimony as this is not to be gainsaid.

The scene of the ball made a deep impression on all present. A few days later "The War," a New York journal, published the following account, written by an eye-witness.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>, 1812.

The news of the third brilliant Naval victory was received in this city through the medium of private letters, on the evening of Tuesday last, and having been announced by an extra from the office of the National Intelligencer, was hailed with the most lively demonstrations of joy. The city was generally, and in some parts of it brilliantly, illuminated, as soon as the day shut in. It so happened that the very evening of its arrival had

been previously selected for 'A Naval Ball,' in compliment to the officers of the Navy generally, and particularly to Captain Stewart, in acknowledgment of his politeness to our citizens on a recent occasion.<sup>1</sup> A large and very respectable company assembled. The scene was graced by the presence of nearly all the beauty and fashion of our City. All was joy and gayety, such as could scarcely admit of augmentation. And yet it was destined to be increased. About nine o'clock a rumor was spread through the assembly that Lieutenant Hamilton, the son of the Secretary of the Navy, had reached the house, the bearer of the colors of the Macedonian and despatches from Commodore Decatur. The gentlemen crowded down to meet him. He was received with loud cheers and escorted to the festive hall, where awaited him the fond embrace of a father, mother, and sisters. It was a scene easier felt than described. The room in which the company had assembled had been previously decorated with the trophies of naval victory. The colors of the *Guerrière* and the *Alert* displayed on the walls roused the proud feelings of patriotism, and had revived in every

<sup>1</sup> This "recent occasion" was a grand dinner given by Captain Stewart on board the *Constellation*, which lay in the Potomac, off Washington. The ship was gaily decorated with flags and bunting, belles and beaux danced beneath an awning of red, white, and blue, and at the upper end of the quarter deck Mrs. Madison sat surrounded by the most distinguished guests. Her son, Payne Todd, was spoken of as the courtliest of all the cavaliers present.

mind the recollection of the bravery which won them. The flag of the Macedonian alone was wanting to complete the group. It was produced and borne into the hall by Captains Hull and Stewart, and others of our brave seamen, amid the loud exclamations of the company, and greeted with national music from the band.

These brilliant triumphs of American arms compelled enthusiasm even from the opposition faction, and from the beginning the administration had had the cordial support of some of the ablest journals in the country. The Muse too had been roused, inspired by patriotic fervor; and many were the metrical compositions (a strict regard for truth forbids me to call them poems) which appeared in the corners of the daily papers. A writer signing himself "Zephri," was one of the most frequent and enthusiastic contributors. One of his effusions written for the "Columbian" was so popular as to be copied in various journals. To our jaded generation which is unwilling to accept sincerity of aim and natural emotion in lieu of correct figures of speech, it may seem to lack something, but it evidently fired the hearts of Zephri's contemporaries.

In one of the many stanzas whose number scarce suffices to express his swelling emotion, he asks : —



“Is there one — a milky heart  
Curdling at the thought of death;  
Shrinking from a valiant part  
To prolong a puny breath?”

If any one is to be found confessing to so ignominious an inward condition, “the coward slave” is bidden to retire, with the express understanding, however, that he forfeits forever all right and title to beauty’s smile, and that he consents to fill a righteously despised grave. One can fancy the thrilling effect of the verse as recited by the school-boy with appropriate gestures, and how it stirred the hearts which were not “milky” to due contempt for those that were.

At the time of the appearance of these lines, a mob in Baltimore was striving to apply their principles practically by compelling the retirement of the editors of a paper called the “Federal Republican” which had been vehement in denouncing the war. The disgraceful attack upon these editors and their friends (among them “Light Horse Harry” Lee), who were defending the liberty of the press with their lives, ended in a wholesale, brutal murder in which nine men were beaten down by butchers’ clubs, and left mutilated on the steps of the jail whither they had been taken for protection. Instantly the country was in an uproar.



Baltimore received the sobriquet of "Mob-Town," and the rioters were spoken of as "Madison's Mob."

Thus, amid war without and dissension within, the first term of the President's administration drew to a close. The opposition was so violent that it seemed quite likely that the government of the country would pass to other hands. There is good reason for believing that Mrs. Madison's popularity, if it did not save the administration, at least formed an important factor in securing the re-election of her husband. Her tact poured oil upon the troubled waters of political life, and the little attentions to the wives of disaffected politicians, which her good nature led her to offer, were not without their influence. There was much jarring in the cabinet itself, and here, too, Mrs. Madison smoothed and softened and quieted, as far as in her lay, all jealousies and disaffections.

Washington Irving, who was again at the capital in the winter of 1812-13, wrote to James Renwick, "Mrs. Madison has been much indisposed, and at last Wednesday's drawing-room Mrs. Gallatin presided in her place." He describes Mrs. Gallatin as the most stylish woman at the levees, and dressed with more "splendor than any other of the noblesse."

“I was not present,” he adds, “but those who were assure me that she filled Mrs. Madison’s chair to a miracle.” When we recall that it was only the year before this that the relations of the President and the Secretary of the Treasury had been so strained that Gallatin had tendered the resignation of his portfolio, one reads between the lines a suggestion that Dolly Madison’s indispositions were put to a good use, and that she was fully alive to the important part played by small things in large affairs.

It is not without a smile, too, that we read of the pleasure with which young Mrs. Seaton, wife of the chief of that influential journal, the “National Intelligencer,” records the attentions paid her by the mistress of the White House. At the first levee in the fall of 1812, she looked on from a distance. “William” (her husband) was much solicited to attend, but preferred remaining at home with his wife, who had not yet been presented to “Her Majesty,” and did not think it etiquette to appear till that ceremony had been performed. Mrs. Madison, however, inquired graciously for her of a relative who was present, and shortly after she and her husband were bidden to a formal dinner at the White House.

The party, beside the Seatons, consisted of the

Secretary of the Treasury, Albert Gallatin, the Minister to England, Mr. Russell, Mr. Richard Cutts, old General Van Ness and his family, General Smith and his daughter from New York, the Magruders, Colonel Goodwyn and daughter, William R. King (then in Congress, subsequently elected vice-president on the ticket with Pierce), and Washington Irving. These, with one or two foreigners, Mr. and Mrs. Madison, the secretary, Mr. Coles, and their son, Payne Todd, made up the company.

Mrs. Seaton gives a very graphic account of the occasion. "William and I," she says; "repaired to the palace between three and four o'clock, our carriage setting us down after the first comers and before the last. It is customary on whatever occasion to advance to the upper end of the room, pay your obeisance to Mrs. Madison, courtesy to His Highness, and take a seat, and after this ceremony being at liberty to speak to acquaintances, etc. Mrs. Madison very handsomely came to me and led me nearest the fire, introduced Mrs. Magruder, and sat down politely between us, talking on familiar subjects, by her own ease and manners making her guests feel at home. Mr. King came to our side *sans cérémonie*, and gaily hatted with us till dinner was announced.

“Mrs. Magruder by privilege of age was entitled to the right hand of her hostess, and I, in virtue of being a stranger, to the next seat; Mr. Russell to her left, the President’s secretary at the foot of the table, the President in the middle, which relieves him from the trouble of serving guests, drinking wine, etc.”

The dinner is described as very fine, particularly the wines, which were much discussed when the cloth was removed. The dessert with its ice-creams, preserves, and macaroons was followed by fruit, nuts, and raisins, and then candles were brought in and the ladies left the table.

To beguile the period of suspended animation before the gentlemen joined them in the drawing-room, Mrs. Madison persuaded Mrs. Seaton to play a waltz upon the grand piano, while she instructed Miss Smith in a new step. At length the gentlemen strolled in, and then all the party adjourned to the tea-room, and here the talk wandered from Shakespeare to the musical glasses, always led by Mrs. Madison. The young guest bursts out at last into irrepressible enthusiasm: “I could describe the dignified appearance of Mrs. Madison, but I could not do her justice. It is not her form; it is not her face. It is the woman altogether whom I should wish you to see. She wears a crimson cap that almost

hides her forehead, but which becomes her extremely, and reminded one of a crown from its brilliant appearance contrasted with the white satin folds and her jet-black curls; but her demeanor is so removed from the hauteur generally attendant on royalty that your fancy can carry the resemblance no further."

Does any one doubt that "William" went home more convinced than ever of the justice of the war and the wisdom of Madison's policy, and that the "National Intelligencer" spread far and wide the opinion that the man for the next presidency was already found, and that James Madison must be his own successor?

On New Year's day, 1813, the White House stood open to all the world, and even the disaffected called to offer greetings to the nation's chief. There was a dense crowd, and the noise was so great that it almost extinguished the music of the Marine Band, who were stationed in the ante-room, puffing, blowing, and thumping in the vain effort to make themselves heard above the babel of human voices.

Mrs. Madison was queenly, in her rose-colored satin robe trimmed with ermine, with her turban fastened by a crescent whence towered white ostrich plumes which marked her wherever she walked. The President was lost from time to

time in the throng; but his wife's plumes towered like the emblem of Navarre.

The blinds were open, and in the midst of the reception the attention of the company was attracted toward an object so brilliant in the winter sunlight that it looked like a golden ball carried along on gilded wings, but when it stopped at the foot of the steps it proved to be only the coach of the French Minister, and the wings but a pair of footmen gorgeous in tinsel-braid, glittering swords, and *chapeaux bras*.

Thus brilliantly opened the year of 1813, and March fulfilled the promise of January. James Madison was again declared President of the United States, and Mistress Dolly entered upon four more years of public life. Their satisfaction in this second triumph was not unalloyed. Both husband and wife were beginning to tire of all the noise and show and glitter. Those who saw the President on this fourth of March (and they included every one who could walk or was the happy possessor of a carriage, or could pay twenty-five cents for hack hire) pronounced him thinner and paler than at his first inauguration. His voice was so low and weak that the words of his address could scarcely be heard, and at his reception the incessant bowing, which in those days took the place of the plebeian hand-shaking of our



time, fatigued him almost beyond endurance ; but his wife was as brilliant, tactful, and helpful as ever, and still mindful of her husband's interests, begged Mrs. Seaton to assist at her levee and "not to desert the standard altogether."

A miniature exquisitely painted on ivory sets forth the Mrs. Madison of those days, as a still blooming dame with a turban of some soft white stuff, showing, however, a wider margin of coal-black curls than the Quakeress cap of old. Ear-drops (she had a pair, of amethyst, hung in chains in shape of a letter M) and a necklace and the bunch of rose-buds set jauntily in the front of the turban give an effect of full-dress, as befits the gown of velvet cut low over the shoulders, with short, puffed sleeves, from beneath which fall full undersleeves of white. A filmy neckerchief of lace, worn rather off than over the shoulders, completes the picturesque and altogether pleasing costume.



## IX

### THE BURNING OF WASHINGTON

It was in the summer of 1814 that the most dramatic event of Mrs. Madison's life occurred. The war had been dragging its slow length along with varying fortunes, when too late the nation awoke to find its capital threatened by a powerful army at its very gates. Washington at this time was a straggling village, numbering about eight thousand inhabitants. It depended for its protection upon a beggarly guard of five hundred regulars and an untrained force of militia, supported by a few gunboats. All at once, these raw troops found themselves opposed to a British army containing a thousand marines and thirty-five hundred veterans who had seen service under Wellington.

The government from Madison down had shown itself fatuously weak in its utter failure to prepare for the emergency. In July General Winder had written : "The door of Washington is wide open and can not be shut with the few troops under my command." Despite the

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warning neither he nor any one else made any adequate effort to shut it, and wide open it still stood on that fatal day in August when the British fleet appeared in Chesapeake Bay off the mouth of the Potomac.

Great was the consternation when a post-rider dashed into Washington bearing the news. At once the wildest excitement prevailed. The President and his cabinet made futile plans which resulted only in a bewildering series of contradictory orders despatched to General Winder, and a general requisition on the Governors of neighboring States for militia to protect the capital. The citizens of Washington held a public meeting and raised a force of volunteer troops which made haste to aid General Winder in erecting defensive works at Bladensburg, a village in Maryland, situated about four miles from Washington,—its doorstep, as it were,—where the first stand against the invaders was finally made. At last, the conviction was forced home upon the most sanguine that the British admiral made no idle threat when he swore he would dine in Washington, and make his bow in Mrs. Madison's drawing-room.

Sunday, August twenty-first, 1814, was anything but a day of rest for the dwellers at the capital. Washington presented a miniature of

the scene at Brussels before Waterloo. Carts loaded with public documents and private valuables rattled over the long bridge, leading across the Potomac to the Virginia shore. Men and women scurried about seeking safe hiding-places for silver and jewels. On Monday the banks sent away all their specie.

Meanwhile the British fleet had passed by the Potomac and sailed up the Patuxent River, landing their troops at Benedict, a point in Maryland about thirty miles to the southeast of Washington. Thence the British forces were marching calmly along the shady high-roads in great enjoyment and meeting not the slightest opposition. On the third day of its uninterrupted advance, the British column fell in with a flotilla of gunboats, which, instead of making any resistance, were blown up by order of Armstrong, the Secretary of War. Barney, the commander of the destroyed flotilla, hastened to add his five hundred men to the number then in Winder's camp, which presented a scene of noise and confusion more like a race-course or a fair than the gathering of an army about to fight for the national capital.

At nightfall on Monday, the twenty-second of August, Madison arrived, accompanied by Armstrong, the Secretary of War, Jones, the Secretary of the Navy, and Attorney-General Rush.

So timid, doubtful, and hesitating a chief as the President could not add to the confidence or effectiveness of either officers or troops. General Winder was little better either as a leader or a strategist, for while he massed his troops at the Navy Yard, he left the Bladensburg road unprotected, and nothing was done towards defending it till news reached him that the British General Ross was actually marching by that path straight on to Washington. Now, indeed, camp was broken, and in two hours, says McMaster, "a motley throng made up of militia, regulars, volunteers, sailors, generals, secretaries and the President, were racing across country to Bladensburg."

The noon of Wednesday, the twenty-fourth, saw the beginning of the battle, which raged hotly till four o'clock. Madison's unfitness for even the nominal position of Commander-in-Chief was painfully apparent throughout. One who was near him reports that he spent his time writing pencilled notes to his wife; and finally, about two o'clock, in the midst of the battle, he turned to his secretaries, saying: "Come, Armstrong, come, Monroe, let us go, and leave it to the commanding general!"

Much sport was afterwards made of this retreat of the President and his cabinet from the field of battle, and later from Washington.

A New York paper said that should some Walter Scott in the next century arise and write a poem on the Battle of Bladensburg, he might fittingly conclude with the lines: —

“Fly, Monroe, fly! Run, Armstrong, run!  
Were the last words of Madison.”

The Washington to which Madison now bent his steps was a panic-stricken village, filled with women, children, and servants, almost wholly deserted of men, for every able-bodied musket-bearer was at the front. Throughout the afternoon the booming of cannon had echoed from the battlefield at Bladensburg, only four miles distant, and none could say how soon the foe would have traversed that short distance, or how soon the British guns would be turned on the buildings of Washington.

Two very vivid pictures of the life at the capital in those trying days, have been left us by the journal of Mrs. Madison, and by the reminiscences of Mr. Madison's faithful slave, Paul Jennings, a man of unusual intelligence and education, who afterwards bought his freedom and remained for many years a respectable citizen of Washington.

Mrs. Madison's journal was kept in the form of a letter to her sister, and reflects, as her writing always does, every varying mood of hope and fear. It bears date —

## THE BURNING OF WASHINGTON

TUESDAY, August 23, 1814.

DEAR SISTER, — My husband left me yesterday morning to join General Winder. He inquired anxiously whether I had courage and firmness to remain in the Presidential house till his return, and on my assurance that I had no fear but for him and the success of our army, he left me, beseeching me to take care of myself and of the cabinet papers, public and private. I have since received two dispatches from him, written with a pencil. The last is alarming, because he desires I should be ready at a moment's warning to enter my carriage and leave the city; that the enemy seemed stronger than had been reported, and that it might happen that they would reach the city with intention to destroy it. . . . I am accordingly ready. I have pressed as many cabinet papers into trunks as to fill one carriage. Our private property must be sacrificed, as it is impossible to procure wagons for its transportation. I am determined not to go myself until I see Mr. Madison safe, and he can accompany me, as I hear of much hostility towards him. . . . Disaffection stalks around us. . . . My friends are all gone; even Colonel C., with his hundred men, who were stationed as a guard in this inclosure. French John [a faithful domestic], with his usual activity and resolution, offers to spike the cannon at the gate, and to lay a train of powder which would blow up the British should they enter the house. To the last proposition I positively object, without being able, however, to make him



understand why all advantages in war may not be taken.

*Wednesday morning, twelve o'clock.* Since sunrise I have been turning my spy-glass in every direction, and watching with unwearied anxiety, hoping to discern the approach of my dear husband and his friends; but alas! I can descry only groups of military wandering in all directions, as if there was a lack of arms or spirit to fight for their own firesides!

*Three o'clock.* Will you believe it, my sister, we have had a battle or skirmish near Bladensburg, and I am still here within sound of the cannon! Mr. Madison comes not. May God protect him! Two messengers, covered with dust, come to bid me fly; but I wait for him. . . . At this late hour a wagon has been procured; I have had it filled with the plate and most valuable portable articles belonging to the house. Whether it will reach its destination, the Bank of Maryland, or fall into the hands of British soldiery, events must determine.

Our kind friend, Mr. Carroll, has come to hasten my departure, and is in a very bad humor with me, because I insist on waiting until the large picture of General Washington is secured, and it requires to be unscrewed from the wall. This process was found too tedious for these perilous moments; I have ordered the frame to be broken and the canvas taken out. It is done, and the precious portrait is placed in the hands of two gentlemen of New York for safe-keeping. And



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now, dear sister, I must leave this house, or the retreating army will make me a prisoner in it, by filling up the road I am directed to take. When I shall again write to you, or where I shall be to-morrow, I cannot tell.

Much has been said touching the episode of the saving of Washington's portrait to which Mrs. Madison alludes in this letter, and a melodramatic tradition represents her as snatching a carving-knife from the table and cutting the canvas from the frame. This is absurd, as the portrait hung so high that a step-ladder was required to reach it. The truth is that on Tuesday afternoon Mr. George Washington Parke Custis, being anxious about the safety of the picture, came over from his home at Arlington to inquire what could be done to secure its preservation. Mrs. Madison still, perhaps, doubting the pressing danger, assured him that it should be taken care of, and even in the distraction of these last agonizingly anxious moments, she was true to the promise she had made. John Siousa, known as "French John," the door-keeper at the White House, and Magrau, the gardener, broke the frame on the dining-room wall as their mistress directed, secured the treasured portrait, and despatched it to a house near Georgetown in a wagon, in which were also stored

some great silver urns and other valuables of large bulk.

This task accomplished, Mrs. Madison turned her thoughts to the method of that flight which her husband's pencilled notes urged upon her as immediately and urgently necessary. How unexpected the emergency was may be inferred from the fact that a dinner-party was planned for the same afternoon at the White House, and the wines and viands were actually demolished by the British officers on their arrival.

Paul Jennings says:—

“On that very morning Gen. Armstrong assured Mrs. Madison there was no danger. The President, with Gen. Armstrong, Gen. Winder, Col. Monroe, et al., rode out on horseback to Bladensburg to see how things looked. Mrs. Madison ordered dinner to be ready at three o'clock, as usual. I set the table myself, and brought up the ale, cider, and wine and placed them in the coolers, as all the Cabinet and several military gentlemen and strangers were expected. While waiting, at just about three, as Sukey, the house-servant, was lolling out of a chamber window, James Smith, a colored man who had accompanied Mr. Madison to Bladensburg, galloped up to the house, waving his hat, and cried out: ‘Clear out, clear out! General Armstrong has ordered a retreat.’

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“All then was confusion. Mrs. Madison ordered her carriage, and passing through the dining-room, caught up what she could crowd into her old-fashioned reticule, and then jumped into the chariot with her servant-girl, Sukey, and Daniel Carrol, who took charge of them. Jo. Bolin drove them over to Georgetown heights. The British were expected in a few minutes. Mr. Cutts, her brother-in-law, sent me to a stable on 14th St. for his carriage. People were running in every direction. John Freeman [the colored butler] drove off in the coachee with his wife, child, and servant; also a feather-bed lashed on behind the coachee, which was all the furniture saved. —

“Mrs. Madison slept that night at Mrs. Love’s, two or three miles over the river. After leaving that place, she called in at a house and went upstairs. The lady of the house, learning who she was, became furious, and went to the stairs and screamed out: ‘Mrs. Madison, if that’s you, come down and go out! Your husband has got mine out fighting, and d—— you you sha’n’t stay in my house. So get out.’ Mrs. Madison complied, and went to Mrs. Minor’s, a few miles further on.”

The opposition journals who made merry over Madison’s retreat found equal food for mirth in his wife’s hasty departure from the White House, and a parody of John Gilpin set forth her supposed address to her husband: —

## *DOLLY MADISON*

“ Sister Cutts and Cutts and I  
And Cutts’s children three  
Will fill the coach, — and you must ride  
On horseback after we.”

It was easy in the light of after events to see the fun of that broad farce, that comedy of errors in which the armies of the two bravest nations on earth were scurrying away from each other, — the head of the American people hurrying away from one hiding-place to another, while the British admiral retreated from the enemy’s capital, as Cockburn did on the next night, in dismay at a thunder-storm. But at the time there was little enough of comedy in the situation to any of those who shared its anxiety and its perils real or fancied. It must be said that none of the prominent figures appear to so much advantage under the trying circumstances as Mrs. Madison. Had her husband shown as much coolness and good judgment, a disgraceful episode might have been omitted from our national history.

A few hours after the President and his wife had quitted the capital Ross and Cockburn, the British commanders, entered the city at the head of their troops, and at once proceeded to wreak their vengeance by setting fire to the Capitol. The old story represented

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Cockburn as jumping upon the Speaker's chair in the House of Representatives, and shouting, "Shall this harbor of Yankee democracy be burned? All for it will say 'Ay.'" And at the chorus of "Ays," the torch was applied. It is a picturesque story, but unfortunately without foundation.

The flames at the Capitol, however, mounted as high as though they had been set by formal vote, and by their lurid light the British soldiers marched along the two miles of Pennsylvania Avenue that lay between the burning building and the President's mansion. At the White House, much to their satisfaction, the officers found the bountiful feast set by Paul Jennings awaiting them. Of this they partook freely before devoting the house to the same fate which had overtaken the Capitol. The rooms having been ransacked, and the wine-cellar robbed of thousands of dollars' worth of wine, the furniture was piled together in the drawing-room and fired by a coal secured from a neighboring tavern. The next buildings to fall victims were the United States Treasury and the office of the "National Intelligencer," the editor of which had been specially severe in denouncing Cockburn. The fires lighted up the midnight sky till the red glare could be seen for many miles.

On Wednesday afternoon Mrs. Madison, after having seen her husband for a short time, had parted from him with many misgivings for his safety, he making his way to the Virginia shore, and she to the house of a friend in Georgetown. Before daybreak on Thursday Mrs. Madison and her little train left this house, which had sheltered them for the night, and set forth on the road to meet her husband at the place which he had appointed. She was met with all the insult which Paul Jennings describes, and was likely to spend the night without a shelter, but at the approach of a thunder-storm the hard heart of the inn-keeper softened, and Mrs. Madison was allowed the poor privilege of sheltering her head under this rude roof. Here at length on Thursday night Mr. Madison appeared pale and tired, but safe, and then nothing could disturb his wife further. Despite cold and hunger and danger and insult she was happy.

Even this comfort, however, was soon shaken, for scarcely had the President fallen into a sleep of utter exhaustion, when a breathless messenger came flying up to the tavern with the warning that the British had discovered his place of concealment and were upon his track. Once more he was compelled to encounter the pitiless, pelting storm, and to take



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refuge in a roughly-built hut in the forest, where he spent the remainder of this wretched night.

On Friday morning Mrs. Madison, having, according to a promise to her husband, adopted a disguise, started forth in a little wagon under the guard of a civilian and a single soldier. But on their way they were met by the joyful news that the British, awe-struck by the fearful tornado which had followed their conflagration, and affrighted by vague rumors of renewed attacks by the Americans, had withdrawn from Washington.

It must have been at this point that Mrs. Madison received the letter from her husband which is to be found in a fragmentary condition among the Madison Papers. The date is torn off, and the writing begins abruptly:—

I cannot yet learn what has been the result. Should the port have been taken, the British ships with their barges will be able to throw the city again into alarm, and you may be again compelled to retire from it, which I find would have a disagreeable effect. Should the Ships have failed in their attack, you can not return too soon. [Torn] — keep Freeman till the question is decided, and then lose no time in sending him to You. In the mean time it will be best for you to remain in your present quarters. I wrote you yesterday morning by



*DOLLY MADISON*

express, from Brookeville, and at the same time to the Sec<sup>y</sup>. of the Navy, supposing you all to be together. It is possible the separation may have prevented your receiving the letter. I returned to the city yesterday, in company with Mr. Monroe, Mr. Rush, &c., and have summoned the Heads of Dept. to meet here without delay. Inclosed is a letter from Mr. Cutts. My next will be by Freeman, & as soon as I can decide the points of your coming on.

Ever & most affy. yours,

J. M.

With lightened hearts the fugitives turned about and began their journey of twenty miles or more back to the capital. When they reached the long bridge at the Virginia shore of the Potomac they found it impassable, having been burned at either end. At first they were denied passage in the only boat which plied across the river, till at length they succeeded in making themselves known to the officer in charge, when the party was ferried over, and Mrs. Madison entered Washington to find the house which she had left only forty-eight hours before, a smoking ruin. Her sister Anna's house became her temporary home, and here the President joined her not to separate from her again.

Before a fortnight had passed the burning

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of Washington was avenged by the death of the invading commander, the repulse of the English troops at Baltimore, the British defeat at Plattsburg, and the surrender of the fleet on Lake Champlain. In the English Parliament the burning of the American capital was stigmatized as "of any enterprise recorded in the annals of war, the one which most exasperated the people and least weakened the government."

## X

### PEACE

“PEACE! Peace! Peace!” The bells rang it from the church-steeple; the cannon boomed it from the embrasures of the forts; the candles blazed it out into the night from every window-pane of cottage and mansion. After nearly three years of war the United States and Great Britain were to be friends once more. No sooner had the sloop-of-war “Favorite,” bearing Mr. Carroll the peace-messenger, touched the wharf at New York than the good news spread like wild-fire all over the country, and everywhere was greeted with tumultuous rejoicings.

At Newport the military paraded, and Thames Street was a blaze of color, wherein banners of red, white, and blue were blended with the red flags of England. The village of Poughkeepsie was illuminated from end to end. Every alley and lane in Baltimore showed candles in the windows. Boston and New York and Philadelphia were one blaze of bon

fires and illuminations. But it was at Washington, where the greatest gloom and anxiety had prevailed, that the wildest reaction of joy now displayed itself. National salutes were fired. The public buildings were draped with flags, and at night the general illumination and the glare of rockets lighted up the sky which six months before had reflected the flames of the Capitol and the White House. That White House was still a charred and blackened ruin not to be restored till Dolly Madison had ceased to be entitled to do its honors.

The tidings of the peace found her established at the Tayloe Mansion, generally called from its peculiar form "The Octagon," situated at the corner of Eighteenth Street and New York Avenue, and commanding a charming view of the Potomac and the heights of Arlington. This house was, of course, the very centre of all the joyous excitement.

One who shared the rejoicings within its walls thus describes the delight with which the news of peace was received there:—

"Late in the afternoon came thundering down Pennsylvania Avenue a coach and four foaming steeds, in which was the bearer of the good news. Cheers followed the carriage as it sped on its way

to the residence of the President. Soon after night-fall, members of Congress and others deeply interested in the event presented themselves at the President's house, the doors of which stood open. When the writer of this entered the drawing-room at about eight o'clock, it was crowded to its full capacity, Mrs. Madison (the President being with the Cabinet) doing the honors of the occasion. And what a happy scene it was! Among the members present were gentlemen of opposite politics, but lately arrayed against one another in continual conflict and fierce debate, now with elated spirits thanking God, and with softened hearts cordially felicitating one another upon the joyful intelligence which (should the terms of the treaty prove acceptable) should re-establish peace. But the most conspicuous object in the room, the observed of all observers, was Mrs. Madison herself, then in the meridian of life and queenly beauty. She was in her person, for the moment, the representative of the feelings of him who was in grave consultation with his official advisers. No one could doubt, who beheld the radiance of joy which lighted up her countenance and diffused its beams around, that all uncertainty was at an end, and that the government of the country had, in very truth (to use an expression of Mr. Adams on a very different occasion), 'passed from gloom to glory.' With a grace all her own, to her visitors she reciprocated heartfelt congratulations upon the glorious and happy change in the aspect of public affairs; dis-

persing with liberal hand to every individual in the large assembly the proverbial hospitalities of that house.”

Not even the servants were forgotten in the general merry-making. Miss Sally Coles, a cousin of Mrs. Madison’s, who afterward married Andrew Stevenson, Minister to Russia, rushed to the head of the basement stairs, shouting, “Peace! peace!” John Freeman, the butler, was ordered to serve out wine freely in the servants’ hall. Paul Jennings played the “President’s March” on his fiddle. French John drank enough to render him unfit for active service for several days, and all the woes and hardships of the past were forgotten.

A few evenings later a grand concert was given by “Seignior Pucci,” under the patronage of the prominent society leaders of Washington, “on the much admired and fashionable King David’s pedal harp,” on which were performed a series of selections adapted to the state of the public mind, and including “Jackson’s March,” “Decatur’s Favorite,” and a medley of national airs of England and America.

The poets, who, from their corner of the daily and weekly journals, had been hurling literary bombs at Great Britain and her

“minions” for months, now of a sudden tuned their verses to piping notes of peace, and began to assure their brethren across the water that they did not think so badly of them after all.

One of these bards writes jovially:—

“Heave to, my old ship-mate! let’s capsize a can  
To the peace that they’ve made there among ’em at Ghent;  
Tho’ we care not for war, yet there is not a man  
Who won’t drink to the Peace, till his rhino is spent!

“Then here’s to us both! We’ve fair wind and fair weather.  
Let the star-spangled banner in triumph be furled;  
We will splice the old cross and our bunting together  
And ride every wave and defy all the world.”

Amid the universal joy, the official blunders of the President were forgotten, if not forgiven, and he found himself restored to all his old-time popularity, which endured even when the Treaty of Ghent was made public, and found less gratifying than had at first been hoped. But more truly than ever was it said that Dolly Madison was the most popular person in the United States. She was beloved by high and low alike. The soldiers, marching gladly home from their long enlistment, stopped to cheer before her house. Her receptions were more brilliant than those of old days in the White House, and the gayeties of



the "Peace Winter" were recalled for years in the annals of Washington.

"The Octagon" still stands among the historic houses of the capital, a symbol of the past, which the tide of fashion has swept by and left stranded like its neighbor, the Van Ness mansion, hemmed in by business blocks and public buildings. Its walls are dilapidated, its rooms bare of furniture, yet they possess a dignity and quaint elegance and refinement which make the modern splendors of the West End seem somewhat garish and newly rich.

The house, which, by the way, is endeared to the popular heart by the rumor of being "haunted," was built by Colonel Tayloe, of Mount Airy, Virginia, before the end of the last century. It is of brick. Its pillared portico, adorned with delicate traceries, leads to a circular vestibule, from which opens a second hall in which a white staircase winds upward through three stories. On the right of this hall is the drawing-room, before whose quaintly carved wooden mantel Mrs. Madison was accustomed to stand to receive her guests, the gowned justices, the foreigners gorgeous in court costume, and the brilliantly uniformed officers. To the left is the dining-room opening directly across from

the parlor. On the floor above in the front of the house over the vestibule is a charming circular boudoir, which suggests the pouting beauties of Watteau, sconces and spinets, blue-ribboned crooks and flowery banks whereon painted shepherdesses recline in impossible attitudes. But instead of all this the walls, hung with maps and engineers' drawings, looked down on the grave faces of Madison and his cabinet, who here met habitually, and here also signed the famous Treaty of Ghent.

From the bedroom beside the boudoir I looked out upon the tree-tops and across the wide-stretching Potomac, and fancied how often Mrs. Madison must have looked over the same shining water to the same blue heights beyond, where lay the beloved Virginia toward which her thoughts turned longingly even in these happy days which crowned the ending of her official life. Before they had done with Washington life, however, the Madisons made still another move from the Tayloe mansion to the two houses forming the corner of the Seven Buildings on Pennsylvania Avenue, where all the brilliant hospitalities of "The Octagon" were continued and even surpassed.

Here the President entertained General Andrew Jackson and his wife. The hero of New Orleans became at once the chief lion of

Washington society, and many dinners were given in his honor at the President's house. The most prominent people of Washington made haste to pay him respect, and his stay at the capital was marked by a series of balls and levees, at which the General appeared somewhat awkward and ill at ease; but the rough exterior and uncouth manners of Jackson comported better with the soldier just from the frontier than afterward with the President of the United States.

In many respects, the manners of those days were not those of our time, — better, perhaps, in some directions, worse in others. It is told, for instance, of Mrs. Madison that, meeting Henry Clay at one of these receptions, she offered him her snuff-box, made of platinum and delicately tinted lava; and that when she herself had taken a pinch and applied it to her nostrils, she drew out a large bandanna handkerchief, remarking that she kept that for "rough work," while the dainty wisp of lawn and lace, wherewith she afterward dusted the tip of her pretty nose, was her "polisher." Other times, other customs; but none the less, Dolly Madison was a very great lady as well as a very great belle; and Sir Charles Bagot, who came over after the peace as Special Ambassador from Great Britain, and who was

well acquainted with the court dames of Europe, pronounced her "every inch a queen."

The fashions of that early time seem as strange to us as the manners. In the "Ladies' Weekly Museum," published in New York, in 1817, and claiming to be "a Polite Repository of Amusement and Instruction, Being an Assemblage of Whatever can interest the mind or exalt the character of the American Fair," I read, between the columns of mild poetry and still milder philosophy, a description of an astonishing walking costume, consisting of a "Round dress of fine cambric, under a pelisse of emerald-green reps sarsnet, ornamented and faced with flutings of green and white satin, elegantly finished by British silk trimmings, and waist girt by a rich silk cordon of the same manufacture with full tassels; bonnet of green curled silk, the crown and ornaments of white satin and emerald-green to correspond with the pelisse; green satin half-boots and Limerick gloves; Berlin ridicule of green and white satin."

The design of this chaste and tasteful emerald costume originated in England, but the French toilettes of the time are even gayer. A correspondent who professes to write from Paris, but who shows himself, or herself, somewhat uncertain as to the spelling of the

Parisian palace, writes: "Nearly all the hats lately exhibited in the *purlieus* of the Thuilleries are of crape. Some are green, with puffing in the front, while others are of citron color, but ornamented with lilies and yellow wall-flowers. The large Neapolitan hats are of blended utrite and lilac, or entirely the latter color, with much white embroidery, and a few grapes and lilies intermingled, about three of each imitation. Some young fashionables sport scarlet under-waistcoats with a black upper; but white upper waistcoats with a scarlet under one are most frequently exhibited."

Mrs. Madison herself, daughter of the Quakers as she was, shared the universal love of gay colors and brilliant effects. Perchance the enforced plainness of her youth had rather stimulated the passion for dress, and the gorgeousness of her later costumes marked a protest and a re-action. The President, in contrast with his wife, in her fine raiment and finer spirits, must have looked doubly sober.

Sullivan, whose Familiar Letters on Public Characters throw much light on the times, says of him, that at the close of his second term he made the impression of "a careworn man, and seemed by his face to have

attained to a more advanced age than was the fact. He had a calm expression, a penetrating blue eye, and looked like a thinking man. He was dressed in black, bald on the top of his head, powdered, of rather protuberant person in front, small lower limbs, slow and grave of speech."

Although he had escaped with surprisingly little loss of prestige from the consequences of his mistakes, he must have felt that his administration had not been all he had hoped to make it when he entered upon the office. The enthusiasm of the nation over the peace had subsided from its first warmth to chill when it was found that the treaty was silent on all the chief points which the government had declared necessary to the well-being and even the self-respect of the United States. The toasts of "Peace and Plenty," which had been drunk at every dinner-table in the winter of 1815, grew less and less frequent, and men began to talk gravely of taxes and tariff laws. When first the "Madison's Night Caps" were lifted from the masts, shouts greeted their removal; the tar barrels were made into bonfires along the wharves, and all the world cried out that the end of all hardships for merchants and shipbuilders was at hand; but before the year was over, the merchants



found Great Britain again shutting American ships out of the West Indian trade, and breaking down American manufactures till American ship-building became a thing of the past, and American merchants found ruin staring them in the face.

During the last two years of his administration Madison strove diligently to heal the wounds which the war had inflicted on the country's credit. How great was the need of a reformation of the national banking system may be inferred from the experience of a man, who, at the close of the war of 1812, carried to a Pennsylvania bank a roll of bills issued by that institution. He demanded gold or silver in exchange for them, but was told that the bank declined to pay gold or silver. "Then," said he, "give me bills of the United States bank." "We have not any," answered the cashier. "Ah!" said the applicant, "then I will take bills on any bank in New England. None of those? Then kindly pay me in *the best counterfeit bills you have.*"

All this was changed before Madison went out of office, and a national bank was created on a sound basis. The war too had not been without its benefits, almost worth its cost. It had done more than twenty years of peace to unite and solidify the nation. It had



produced the national anthem of the Star-Spangled Banner, which, if we may believe Fletcher of Saltoun, was a more important matter than all the legislation of Congress, and it had bequeathed a cluster of sayings which went at once to the popular heart, and are likely long to survive in the popular memory, — “Don’t give up the ship;” “Our country right or wrong;” “We have met the enemy and they are ours;” and to these might be added the epigrams of the Abbe Correa, Minister to this country from Portugal, in 1816. He it was who called Washington “the City of Magnificent Distances,” and said that “Providence takes care of idiots, drunkards, and the United States.”

With the spring of 1817 Madison’s term came to an end, and as the fourth of March, which was to see Monroe installed as his successor, drew near, the Madisons began to prepare for departure with mingled feelings of relief and regret. Montpelier promised rest and refreshment after long struggle and turmoil; but the intimate friendships of sixteen years were now to be severed, and a farewell must be said by James Madison and his wife to the scenes which had witnessed the best and the worst that life could offer them. Such a farewell is not uttered without pro-

found emotion, and their feeling was most earnestly reciprocated by those whom they left behind, who had for so long a time walked and worked by their side.

A letter written at this moment by Judge William Johnson of the United States Supreme Court is touching from its evident genuineness of feeling peeping through all the stiff verbiage of the day like a rose in an Italian garden :

WASHINGTON, 1817.

I am this moment on the eve of leaving Washington, and shall leave it without a parting interview with one whom I must be indulged in the liberty of comprising among the most respected and most cherished of my friends. But you, madam, cannot mistake the feelings which dictate to me this mode of making you an humble tender of a most affectionate adieu.

You are now about to enter upon the enjoyment of the most enviable state which can fall to the lot of mankind — to carry with you to your retirement the blessings of all who ever knew you. Think not, madam, that I address to you the language of flattery. It is what no one but yourself would hesitate at conceding. And be assured that all who have ever enjoyed the honor of your acquaintance, will long remember that polite condescension which never failed to encourage the diffident, that suavity of manner which tempted the morose or thoughtful

to be cheerful, or that benevolence of aspect which suffered no one to turn from you without an emotion of gratitude.

Permit, madam, one who has shared his due proportion of your attentions to make you a sincere tender of the most heartfelt gratitude and respect, and to wish that you may long enjoy every blessing that Heaven dispenses to the meritorious.

Do me the favor to tender to Mr. Madison also a respectful adieu, and a cordial and sincerely friendly one to your son.

Very respectfully,

WILLIAM JOHNSON, JR.

Another elaborate tribute of respect to the ex-President and his wife was paid by the elegant Mr. Dawson, who wrote:—

WASHINGTON, March 13th, 1817.

It is with the hope that I may be permitted, without the imputation of vanity, to convey in this manner to M<sup>r</sup> & M<sup>rs</sup> Madison, upon their retiring to the pleasing scenes of private life, my most sincere wishes that they may both long enjoy every felicity which this world can possibly afford, and to beg they will have the goodness to be assured that although I have not on particular occasions mingled with the numbers who, by personal attendance, might be supposed in that way to testify their respect, yet, so far as an obscure individ-

ual may presume, I cannot yield an iota of that respect, even to the most assiduous.

I have the honor to be, with every sentiment of respect, M<sup>r</sup> & M<sup>rs</sup> Madison's very obed<sup>t</sup> humble Serv<sup>t</sup>,

JOSHUA DAWSON.

Accompanied thus by compliments and kind wishes and loving thoughts, Mrs. Madison took leave of the city of Washington. Her memory did not pass away with her presence from the capital. In the year following her departure from Washington the "Portfolio," edited by "Oliver Oldschool," offered its readers a number "embellished" with a portrait of Mrs. Madison, and opening with a sketch (an exceedingly sketchy sketch) of her life. In this, as in Judge Johnson's letter, we find the ornate periods, the long words and formal compliments wherewith our ancestors loved to decorate their writing, yet its tribute is genuine and its estimate not unjust.

It begins in stately fashion, using the editorial plural:—

"We had the pleasure of seeing her some years ago, on the occasion of a splendid fête, which was given by his excellency, M. Daschkoff, the minister from Russia, in honour of the natal day of his sovereign. We remarked the ease with which she glided

into the stream of conversation and accommodated herself to its endless variety. In the art of conversation she is said to be distinguished, and it became evident, in the course of the evening, that the gladness which played in the countenances of those whom she approached was inspired by something more than mere respect. We fear that our artists have not presented an adequate representation of the features of this lady. [They certainly have not, for the portrait represents a thick-nosed, bare-necked woman, with an artificial smile, and an expression of eye closely approaching a wink, only recognizable as Mrs. Madison from the inevitable turban and the little curls about the forehead.]

“We have not forgotten how admirably the air of authority was softened by the smile of gayety: and it is pleasing to recall a certain expression that must have been created by the happiest of all dispositions, — a wish to please, and a willingness to be pleased. This, indeed, is to be truly good and really great. Like a summer’s sun she rose in our political horizon, gloriously, and she sunk, benignly.”

## XI

### LIFE AT MONTPELLIER

THE old post-road from Washington to the South leads through a series of shabby little towns, over a rolling country, now stretching its bridges over runs and rivers, and anon winding through fields of grain and tobacco hedged in by the zig-zag Virginia rail fences. Wherever the ground peeps through its green blanket it shows its characteristic tinge of deep red,—a cloud of fire in drought, a slough of despond in wet weather.

The village of Orange, which is the cluster of houses nearest to Montpellier, lies about eighty-four miles to the southwest of Washington. The distance which the railroad train now covers in two or three hours required as many days to traverse by coach in olden times; even longer, probably, in that early spring weather after the fourth of March, 1817, when Mr. and Mrs. Madison journeyed over it, and when the roads were heavy. The first stage of the journey is tedious and some-

what desolate. The country looks as though nature had abandoned it to man, and man had not yet accepted the trust; but as the road advances southward, the foothills of the mountains rise encouragingly before the eyes, the country begins to roll itself into green billows, and in the distance, like stately sentinels, loom the cones of the Blue Ridge.

From Orange the road to Montpellier winds somewhat sharply uphill, through groves of thick-growing pines, till at last it halts before an old-fashioned gateway, whose posts are topped with the always graceful urn. Beyond lies still another barred gate, and then the road sweeps with a wide tranquil curve to the foot of the steps which lead up to the broad, pillared portico.

The Montpellier homestead is a mansion. Before the eye has had time to take measures, it is assured of this fact. As in all true architecture, the proportions are so just, the lines so simple, the scheme so dignified, that the house needs no vast size to lend it impressiveness, yet even by the crude test of the foot-rule, Montpellier is by no means insignificant. Its length is a hundred and fifty feet and its depth thirty-two feet. Part of the length lies in the one-storied wings, which, set back a little from the main building, ex-



tend some twenty feet on either side, their flat roofs protected by a wooden balustrade.

As the front door swings open, one looks across the shallow hall which runs along the front of the house, connecting the wings, and if the opposite door of the wide saloon beyond chance also to stand ajar, a glimpse of lawn bounded by trees and hedges catches the vision. The square saloon within is shady and cool in the greatest heats of summer, so sheltered is it by the porches on either hand.

On the lawn a few rods to the west of the house stands a charming little classic temple, "contrived a double debt to pay," the upper part serving for a summer-house, as its roof shuts out the sunlight, which is still of a southern intensity, even when filtered through the leafy screen of overhanging branches, while beneath its floor is stored the ice which supplies the table of the mansion. From between the delicate pillars which support its dome the idler from his lounging chair can see the lovely curves of the hills scumbled to dimness here and there with clouds and distant mist. It is a spot for dreaming rather than doing, and Madison must have found himself compelled to turn his back upon the too beguiling prospect before he could bend his mind to study or to work.

At the rear of the house lies the garden which Mrs. Madison made her especial care. The path which leads to it is bordered with thick-set hedges of box which have now grown to a height in some places above a man's head. These hedges shut out the sight of the garden till one is close upon it, when he sees it lying spread out at his feet. It is said that Madison planned the horse-shoe terraces in imitation of the galleries of the Hall of Representatives at Washington, and that the parallelogram which lies below represents the floor of that house.

The chief gardener was a Frenchman named Beazée, and under Mrs. Madison's superintendence he planted, tended, watered, and gathered not only the flowers which were brought indoors to brighten and perfume the square saloon, but also the fruits and more prosaic vegetables which contributed to the well-being of the household and the stranger within its gates. An important part such a garden played in the management of an estate four miles distant from the nearest market, where guests, expected and unexpected, arrived in great numbers at all times and seasons.

No wonder Dolly Madison expended much energy and interest upon its domain. She was always an early riser, and often while her

visitors were drowsing in the slothful delights of the stolen morning nap, Mrs. Madison was walking along the paths between the trim box-borders of her beloved garden, her apron tied over her dress, and her wide-brimmed bonnet shielding her eyes from the morning sun, beside her some little black boy carrying the basket into which fell the ripe fruit her hands gathered, or the tall growing roses as they were severed from their stems by her shears, and the pink oleander blossoms which were her favorite flowers, and which she loved to pluck and pin upon the dresses of her young girl visitors.

It is a striking comment upon Mrs. Madison's character that she could find happiness and contentment amid such simple surroundings and occupations. A vainer woman would have been miserable at the withdrawal of the adulation which had followed her for a score of years. A weaker woman would have sighed for the excitements of town life. Dolly Madison neither sighed nor moped, but set about living in these changed surroundings with a steady serenity, and the cheerfulness of a healthy mind conscious of resources within itself, and capable of setting its own tasks and making its own pleasures. The chief duty as well as the chief pleasure of her life at Mont-

pellier in these days lay in the care of her husband's mother, now advanced far beyond the limits of three score and ten, yet still, in spite of her burden of over ninety years, of clear intelligence and winning personality.

The "old wing," as it was called, being the one to the right of the door on entering, was set apart wholly for the use of Madison's mother. One who saw her in those surroundings says:—

"All the appointments of her dwelling bespoke the olden day; dark and cumbrous old carved furniture, carpets of which the modern loom has forgotten the patterns, implements that looked as if 'Tubal Cain has designed them; upholstery quaintly, if not queerly, venerable. In short, all the objects about her were in keeping with her person and attire. You would have said that they and she had sat to Sir Godfrey Kneller for a family picture, or that you yourself had suddenly been transported back to Addison's time, and were peeping by privilege into the most secluded parts of Sir Roger de Coverley's mansion.

"Indeed, to confirm the illusion, you would probably find her reading the 'Spectator' in the large imprint and rich binding of its own period, or thumbing (as our degenerated misses do a novel of the Dickens or Sue School) the leaves of Pope, Swift, or Steele. . . . Such books, then and when her old eyes grew weary, the almost equally antiquated

occupation of knitting, habitually filled up the hours of this old-time lady: the hours we mean when pain or feebleness remitted her for occupation. As to those sadder moments of suffering, or of that sinking of the bodily powers which presses at times upon far-advanced age, she bore them with the cheerfulest patience, and even treated them as almost compensated by the constant delight of the affections which the pious care of her children gave her all the while. Nothing could exceed their watchfulness to serve her, soothe her, minister to her such enjoyments as may be made by lovingness to linger around even the last decline of a kindly and well-spent-life.

“In all such offices her son bore as much part as his own frail health and the lesser aptitude of men for tending the sick permitted; but no daughter ever exceeded in the tender and assiduous arts of alleviation of suffering the attentions which Mrs. Madison gave to her husband’s infirm parent. It was a part, however, of her system of happiness for the ancient lady at once to shut out from her what she could ill sustain, — the bustle of that large establishment and the gayeties of the more miscellaneous guests that often thronged it, and yet to bring to her, in special favor towards them, such visitors as could give her pleasure and break the monotony of her general seclusion. These were sometimes old and valued friends; sometimes their hopeful offspring; and, occasionally, personages of such note as made her curious to see them. All such she

received, according to what they were, with that antique cordiality or amenity which belonged to the fine old days of good breeding, of which she was a genuine specimen."

Eleanor Conway Madison (generally spoken of as "Nellie Madison," as her daughter-in-law was called Dolly), at ninety, was a charming picture of serene age, occupied, cheerful, and content, living in her old room, among her old furniture, waited upon by gray-haired servants, — a typical "Madam Placid."

Mrs. Margaret Smith, a dear friend of Dolly Madison, and a frequent guest at Montpelier, was also a frequent visitor in the old-fashioned retreat wherein Madison's mother held sway, and where she was always sure of a hearty welcome. "I asked her, wrote Mrs. Smith, after one of these visits, how she passed her time. 'I am never at a loss,' she replied. 'This and these,' touching her knitting and her books, 'keep me always busy. Look at my fingers, and you will perceive that I have not been idle' (the tips of the fingers were indeed polished by the knitting-needles), 'and my eyes, thanks be to God, have not failed me yet, and I read most part of the day. But in other respects I am feeble and helpless, and owe everything to *her*' (pointing to her daughter-in-law). 'She is *my* mother now.'"



The care and affection which James Madison's wife bestowed upon his mother was no more than an adequate return for the interest which he had always shown in her family circle. Her mother had shared his home. Her sister Lucy had lived at the White House during her widowhood, and Anna Payne had grown up under his care, and continued to live under his roof till her marriage with Mr. Cutts. To the Cutts children he continued the same uniform kindness, and with how much solicitude he watched their development may be inferred from the long letters which he took time, in the midst of all the pressure of business, quite as great at Montpellier as in Washington, to write. In one of these letters to young Richard Cutts, he says:—

“Your letter, my dear Richard, gave me much pleasure, as it shews that you love your studies, which you would not do if you did not profit by them. Go on, my good boy, and you will find that you have chosen the best road to a happy life, because a useful one, the more happy because it will add to the happiness of your parents and of all who love you and are anxious to see you desiring to be loved. When I was at an age which will soon be yours, a book fell into my hands which I read, as I believe, with peculiar advantage. I have always



thought it the best that had been written for cherishing in young minds a desire for improvement, a taste for learning, and a lively sense of the duties, the virtues, and the proprieties of life.

“The work I speak of is ‘The Spectator,’ well known by that title. It had several authors, at the head of them Mr. Addison, whose papers are marked at the bottom of each one of the letters in the name of the muse, ‘Clio.’ They will reward you for a second reading after reading them along with the others.

“Addison was of the first rank among the fine writers of the age, and has given a definition of what he showed himself to be an example. ‘Fine writing,’ he says, ‘consists of sentiments that are natural without being obvious,’ to which adding the remark of Swift, another celebrated author of the same period, making a good style to consist of ‘proper words in their proper places,’ a definition is formed which will merit your recollection, when you become qualified, as I hope you will one day be, to employ your pen for the benefit of others, and for your own reputation. I send you a copy of the ‘Spectator,’ that it may be at hand when the time arrives for making use of it; and as a token, also, of the good wishes of your affectionate Uncle.”

It is deeply to be regretted that Madison, who did so much for his nephews, was unable to exert his influence nearer home, and to impress his own worthy characteristics upon

his graceless step-son. From the beginning he treated Payne Todd with all the gentleness and forbearance of a father, and with perhaps less sternness than he would have shown towards a son of his own,—a sternness which young Todd richly deserved, and which might have greatly improved him.

It would be unjust to ascribe to maternal influence the difference between a John Quincy Adams and a John Payne Todd, yet one cannot avoid the impression that had Dolly Madison established the combined firmness of discipline and closeness of companionship which marked the intercourse of Abigail Adams with her children, she might have escaped many of the deplorable consequences growing out of her son's conduct and misconduct.

From the time of his coming to Montpellier as a tiny boy, Payne Todd showed himself at once weak and wilful. As he grew older he was sent to Baltimore to a Roman Catholic school. He was a handsome lad with an attractive face and something of his mother's charm of manner, but both charm and beauty were early destroyed by dissipation, and his spendthrift habits foretold the anxieties sure to befall his mother.

In 1813, at the age of twenty-one, he was sent abroad, and accompanied the ambassa-

dors despatched to negotiate the treaty at Ghent in 1814. Albert Gallatin was one of these ambassadors, and his wife, who was a warm friend and admirer of Mrs. Madison, wrote home at intervals of Payne's enjoying his trip and meeting many attentions abroad. No doubt it pleased the young man mightily to be called the "Prince of America," and to dance with the Russian princesses within the sacred space reserved for royalty, while Henry Clay and John Quincy Adams looked on from the more plebeian gallery. Yet the wisdom of the expedition seems more than doubtful, and it is certain that the young man received more harm than good from his European wanderings.

When at last he returned to America, instead of settling down to work as his mother had fondly hoped, he idled away his time, first in one city, then in another, and his own money having been soon consumed, he began to make constant applications to his mother for funds, and to contract debts which were paid over and over by his step-father. His mother ardently desired him to marry; but he showed no sign of any such intention; though he did have the grace to fall honestly and respectably in love with the beautiful Ann Cole, a Williamsburg belle, who was hard-hearted or far-sighted enough to decline his suit, — a

fact for which Dolly Madison, womanlike, bore a little resentment, and counselled her son to remember that there were plenty of other charming girls in the world, and he need not turn his back upon the sex because one proved unkind. He preferred, however, to drown his sorrow, if indeed his nature was capable of any real grief, in the wine-cup, and continued to amuse himself with other kindred spirits around the gaming-table.

His mother's letters to him throughout this period are pitiful. She tells him that every one is inquiring for him, and wondering that he should stay away so long, and she (alas!) is ashamed to tell the length of his absence. His gambling debts are spoken of as business embarrassments, concerning which she counsels him to consult with his father and herself, and begs him to come home. The perpetual burden of every letter is, "Come home!" Yet, when he did come there could be little sympathy between the unreformed prodigal and the simple, monotonously temperate and virtuous household at Montpellier; and on the whole his mother's heart must have been lighter when he took his departure, and she was not forced by daily reminders to realize what an utter wreck he had made of his life.

It was well, perhaps, that Mrs. Madison had so many duties to occupy her time that she had little leisure to dwell upon this disappointment, the greatest grief of her middle life until the overshadowing sorrow of her husband's death. Her days were very full. In addition to the care of the garden all the superintendence of the household devolved upon her. To her it fell to distribute the provisions and to turn the key, as was necessary, upon all the store-rooms; to attend to the cutting out of the wearing apparel for all the servants; to visit the negro quarters; in the event of a birth among the slaves, to superintend the care of mother and child; to listen to complaints; to treat symptoms with the simple medicaments usually kept at hand in every southern plantation household; and finally when all these matters were attended to, the chief business of the day, the entertainment of guests, was to be seriously undertaken.

In the rare intervals when Montpellier was without visitors, Mrs. Madison spent her days in efforts to spare her husband's eyes by acting as his amanuensis in his correspondence, and by reading aloud from the books which strewed the tables, chairs, and floor of his library "thick as leaves in Vallombrosa."

Mrs. Madison's own sight was far from strong, and in her later years her eyes gave her much trouble. In 1833 Madison writes to Mr. Benjamin Waterhouse, acknowledging the receipt of a book. "Although the state of my eyes," he says, "permits me to read but little, and my rheumatic fingers abhor the pen, I did not resist the attraction of your literary present, and I drop you a line to thank you for it. Mrs. Madison's eyes being in the same state with mine, we found it convenient to read in a sort of partnership, and you may consider her as a partner also in the thanks for it. Should you enlarge a new edition as you hint, by the introduction of a Pocahontas or two among the *dramatis personæ*, the redness of the skin would not in her eyes impair the merit it covers."

This letter, which is surely a model of urbane and non-committal acknowledgment of the "presentation copy," shows that Mrs. Madison's sight was even then failing, and that her general health was also beginning to break appears from various paragraphs in her husband's letters. To Mrs. Margaret Smith he writes that Mrs. Madison has lately been seriously ill, but is now recovering. To Jefferson, with whom his intimacy never flagged, he often expresses anxiety about his



wife's health, but Mrs. Madison's own letters are all so bright, so cheerful, and so overflowing with interest in others, that they give little hint of her physical limitations, and through her husband she is constantly sending affectionate words and gracious compliments and good wishes to his correspondents. To R. B. Lee, Madison writes: "Mrs. Madison desires to be remembered to Mrs. Lee, with an assurance of her continued affection and of the lively interest she feels in whatever may relate to the happiness of her early and highly valued friend." To Henry Clay: "Mrs. Madison charges me with affectionate regards to Mrs. Clay." To George Ticknor: "Mrs. Madison is greatly obliged by the portrait of the Hero of Liberty and Humanity so dear to us all;" and to Edward Livingston, who has sent a portrait of himself to his friends at Montpellier: "The promised bust will be received by Mrs. Madison with pleasure, the greater as she knows I shall share it with her. It will be associated in the little group with the class which adds to other titles to commemorative distinction appeals to the feelings of private friendship."

In looking through the voluminous files of the Madison Papers, I have made a partial list of the gifts to Mr. and Mrs. Madison which



are alluded to in their pages. It is a strange medley, and includes every variety of article, — busts and statues, portraits and paintings; a chair from the Emperor of Morocco; a set of china once the property of Marie Antoinette; a pair of decanters made in America; a bag of white Sumatra peppers; a box of lupinella-seed; grafts of tulip-trees and St. Germain pears; strawberry plants and Natchitoches snuff; a pair of Coke-Devon calves; merino sheep; white mice, pheasants, and tiger-skins. Mrs. Randolph sends Madison her cookery-book, and, to make the honors even, Weems sends his *Life of William Penn* to Mrs. Madison, to whom also Solomon Southwick presents “a perfect set of the ‘Christian Visitant.’” A Frenchman sends a glass flute, his own invention, and a German makes a more substantial offering of a case of hock.

The list soon becomes tedious in length; but it serves to show how constantly and affectionately the Madisons were remembered, not only in their days of power, but in that period of seclusion when gifts carried a sense of true affection, and of that gratitude which was a genuine recognition of good offices in the past rather than “a lively sense of favors to come.” The mere acknowledgment of all the offerings which came to Montpellier was a tax upon the

time and strength of the Madisons, but it opened up charming new acquaintances and strengthened the old familiar ties. By correspondence such as theirs with all parts of Europe and America, the ex-President and his wife were held in touch with all the affairs moving in the outer world. All the news public and private drifted sooner or later to their door. Gossiping letters from the capital told of great things and small. The marriage of President Monroe's daughter, and the festivities so rudely interrupted by the duel of Barron and Decatur, and the death of the latter, which threw the city into mourning; of the various grand entertainments which marked the administration of Monroe, and later of John Quincy Adams, and the final culmination of social excitement in the ball given by Mrs. Adams, eclipsing all foregoing festivities, and made notable by the enormous throng of people who crowded every corner and stood on chairs in order to get a glimpse of the people's hero, Andrew Jackson,—an occasion which inspired a poem of innumerable stanzas, with the refrain:—

“ Mothers, daughters,  
Maids and Madams, —  
All are gone  
To Mrs. Adams.”

The latest news of the literary world, as well as the social, drifted to the doors of Montpellier; but Mrs. Madison's life was too busy for much reading, even had her taste inclined in that direction, which it did not. She writes occasionally to a friend begging for some new novel, and complains of Cooper (fancy it!) as too melodramatic, and dealing in the horrible beyond the endurance of her nerves. On one occasion she contemplates a plunge into so serious a work as the Romance of History; but there is no record of her finishing it, and she returns *The Oxonians*, finding her mind too occupied with family anxieties to enjoy reading.

In the main, despite all these anxieties, Dolly Madison's life at Montpellier during the nineteen years between her leaving Washington in 1817 and her husband's death in 1836, were full of sunshine, full of occupation, and overshadowed by fewer clouds of trouble and sorrow than darken the lot of most mortals.

## XII

### VIRGINIA HOSPITALITY

DURING the entire period of Madison's retirement until within a few months of his death, when illness compelled seclusion, the gates of Montpelier were never closed to friend or stranger. Visitors of every kind, impelled by every variety of motive, claimed entrance here, and had their claim allowed. Distinguished foreigners, such as Lafayette, Harriet Martineau, and the Count D'Orsay, came to establish or renew an acquaintance with the man whose fame as the "Father of the Constitution" had travelled over Europe. Stanch Democrats came from all parts of the United States to pay their respects to Jefferson's greatest disciple; and tourists to the Virginia Springs, whose road lay very near, were glad of the opportunity to satisfy their curiosity by a glimpse of the ex-President, and his no less famous wife. In addition to these visitors must be reckoned the host of political friends and acquaintances making semi-annually pil-

grimaces to Washington, the army of relatives on either side of the family and finally the neighbors who in summer weather drove over from their adjacent plantations to spend the day, arriving in the middle of the morning in order to give time for additional preparations for the midday dinner, and remaining till the coolness of the afternoon rendered the return drive pleasant.

It was a principle at Montpellier that every guest must be feasted,—“if a stranger, because strangers ought to be made to pass their time as agreeably as possible; if a friend, because nothing can be too good for one’s friends.” A contemporary truly observed that where such a domestic policy prevailed there would seldom be a lack of guests. “Indeed,” he says, “the condition is one hard to avoid, and so pleasant withal that we have known persons of wit and breeding to adopt it as their sole profession, and benevolently pass their lives in guarding their friends, one after another, from the distresses of a guestless mansion.”

The dining-room of Montpellier was a rather large, square room in the new wing opposite the apartments of Madison’s mother; but large as it was, its capacity was often taxed by the number of those who came to share its bounty; and on special occasions, such as the Fourth

of July, which was always a time of great hilarity at Montpellier as throughout the country, it was found necessary to set the tables out of doors.

In a letter written to her sister Anna, in 1820, Mrs. Madison says:—

“Yesterday we had ninety persons to dine with us at one table, fixed on the lawn, under a large arbor. The dinner was profuse and handsome, and the company very orderly. Many of your old acquaintances were here — among them the two Barbours. We had no ladies except Mother Madison, Mrs. Macon, and Nelly Willis. The day was cool and all pleasant. Half a dozen only staid all night, and are now about to depart. President Monroe’s letter this morning announces the French Minister; we expect him this evening, or perhaps sooner, though he may not come until to-morrow; but I am less worried here with a hundred visitors than with twenty-five in Washington, this summer especially.”

The two Barbours alluded to in this letter were brothers, whose name is still preserved in the little town of Barboursville lying on the route of the Southern Railway three miles south of Montpellier. They were prominent men in Virginia, Philip becoming a judge, and James Governor of the State. John Randolph described the difference between

them with his usual caustic wit, saying, "Phil aims at a horse hair and splits it; James aims at a barn-door and misses it." Both were men of marked ability, however, and frequent visitors at Montpellier.

But the most cherished and eagerly looked for of all the guests at Mrs. Madison's home were Jefferson, his daughter, Mrs. Randolph, and her family. With them there was no constraint, no concealment, no effort, and in the return of these visits the Madisons found an occasional needed respite from their own duties of host and hostess. Monticello as well as Montpellier was sadly taxed with uninvited guests, and Jefferson even more than Madison suffered from the irksome duties of giving time and strength to the entertaining of uncongenial and indifferent comers from all directions.

Captain Bacon, the steward of Monticello, says that Jefferson was literally eaten out of house and home by his guests: —

"They were there all times of the year; but about the middle of June the travel would commence from the lower part of the State to the Springs, and then there was a perfect throng of visitors. They travelled in their own carriages and came in gangs, the whole family with carriage and riding horses and servants, sometimes three or



four such gangs at a time. We had thirty-six stalls for horses, and only used about ten of them for the stock we kept there. Very often all of the rest were full and I had to send horses off to another place. I have often sent a wagon-load of hay up to the stable, and the next morning there would not be enough left to make a bird's nest. I have killed a fine beef and it would be all eaten in a day or two."

Bacon saw with alarm that this wholesale hospitality was making serious inroads upon the estate, and he strove to introduce various small economies. Unknown to his master, he ordered half rations given to visitors' horses, but Jefferson soon heard of the matter, and countermanded the order. The steward was in despair. His master, he says, knew that his income was being exceeded, but in his politeness he continued to bid all the world welcome, and to offer the best he could set before them. Shrewd Captain Bacon, who played the part of Sancho Panza to Jefferson's Quixote, remarks: "They pretended to come out of respect and regard to him, but I think that the fact that they saved a tavern bill had a good deal to do with it, with a good many of them."

That Jefferson and his family, however smiling a front they might present to the

world, were often worn out with the arduousness of their social duties, appears very distinctly in a couple of letters which passed between him and his daughter. Mrs. Randolph writes:—

“I was at Monticello one day before the arrival of any one, and one more day of interval between the departure of one family and the arrival of another; after which time I never had the pleasure of passing one sociable moment with you. Always in a crowd, taken from every useful and pleasing duty to be worried with a multiplicity of disagreeable ones, which the entertaining of such crowds of company subjects one to in the country. . . . I find myself every day becoming more averse to company.”

Her father replies with sincere sympathy:—

“Nobody can ever have felt so severely as myself the prostration of family society from the circumstance you mention. . . . But there is no remedy. The present manners and usages of our country are laws we cannot repeal. They are altering by degrees, and you will live to see the hospitality of the country reduced to the visiting hours of the day, and the family left to tranquillity in the evening.”

Mrs. Madison never gave utterance to any sentiment as radical as these of Jefferson to

his daughter; but there appears from time to time in her letters a gentle weariness acknowledging that the play is excellent, yet "would it were done." Her husband chafed more under the restraint than she, casting longing looks at the closed door of his dear library, and then returning to the restraints imposed by civility and his duties as host. Yet with them both this mood was occasional, and varied by times of the keenest enjoyment in finding themselves surrounded by friends to whose enjoyment and amusement they were able to contribute so much.

The mansion at Montpellier was admirably adapted to the hospitalities which it so bountifully offered. The rooms were large, with a certain air of nobleness, the furniture neither sparse nor huddled. Nothing seemed done for show, but everything for comfort. "You soon grew at your ease," says a visitor within its walls, "if at arriving you had been otherwise, for here was in its perfection that happiest part and surest test of good-breeding, — the power of at once putting every one at ease. The attentions not over-assiduous, not slack, but kept to a great degree out of sight, by making a body of thoroughly-trained and most mannerly servants their ministrants, so that the hosts performed

in person little but the higher rites of hospitality, and thus seemed to have no trouble and much pleasure in entertaining you. Accordingly there has seldom, even in the hilarious land of old Virginia, been a house kept, — especially by elderly people, — at which it was pleasanter to be a sojourner. They always made you glad to have come and sorry that you must go.”

This was indeed the essence of fine hospitality, and like the quality of mercy it blessed those that gave as well as those who received. To Madison it meant a constant polishing of the mind and manners which so soon grow rusty in complete inaction and seclusion, and to Mrs. Madison it supplied the lack of a liberal education, as well as of the advantages of travel. The world came to her who had otherwise never seen the world, for Dolly Madison’s little journeyings were bounded by the strip of coast lying between New York and North Carolina. Of Europe she knew nothing, and her familiarity with her own country was limited to an acquaintance with three or four large towns and an experience of Virginia country-life. Yet, thanks to her wide and cosmopolitan acquaintance, she had become herself a cosmopolitan.

The precise amount of pleasure or the

reverse to be extracted from the exercise of such unlimited hospitality as prevailed at Montpellier is impossible to estimate, because it varied with the individual occasion, and the conclusion of the whole matter was well expressed by Madison when he said that some visits were taxes and others bounties. He was wont to smile, in his moderate, drily humorous fashion, over the occasional lack of congeniality between host and guests which made conversation difficult and sympathy impossible. He told in particular of a young Englishman visiting at Montpellier, whose passion was geology, concerning which Madison was as ignorant as he was indifferent. Much to his amusement, he saw his guest one morning rushing toward him in a transport of enthusiasm, holding out a stone, which he almost thrust into Madison's face, crying out, "Graywacke, sir! graywacke, graywacke!"

Among the visits which were reckoned as "bounties" at Montpellier few were recorded with more satisfaction than that received from Harriet Martineau, who, in the autumn of the year 1834, had come to America with the purpose of investigating for herself the existing condition of slavery in "the States." Mrs. Madison wrote at once inviting her to come to Montpellier, where she would have every op-

## VIRGINIA HOSPITALITY

portunity to study the question at short range, and Miss Martineau gladly accepted the invitation. Of this visit she gives a graphic and most enthusiastic description in her *Retrospect of Western Travel*.

She and her vivacious little friend and companion, Miss Jeffrey, left Washington in the spring of 1835 with a vague feeling that they were plunging into an unknown region, and certain political alarmists strove to foment their anxieties by picturing the dangers to which Miss Martineau would be exposed in the South on account of her well-known anti-slavery sentiments, which she had too much principle and too little tact to conceal. If, however, Harriet Martineau and her friend started forth with any apprehensions of social martyrdom, their experience at Montpellier speedily allayed all fears.

At Orange Court House the perfidious inn-keeper, concealing the fact that Mr. Madison had given directions that he be informed of their arrival in order that he might send his carriage, rented them an uncomfortable turnout at an excessive charge; but the tourists were not sufficiently out of sorts to lose the pleasure of the drive, and a very lovely drive it was, save for the mud, even at that bare season. Miss Martineau wrote afterwards:—



“It was a sweet day of early spring. The patches of snow that were left under the fences and on the rising grounds were melting fast. The road was one continued slough up to the very portico of the house. The dwelling stands on a gentle eminence, and is neat and even handsome in its exterior, with a flight of steps leading up to the portico. A lawn and wood, which must be pleasant in summer, stretch behind, and from the front there is a noble object on the horizon, the mountain chain which traverses the State, and makes it eminent for its scenery. The shifting lights upon these blue mountains were a delightful refreshment to the eye after so many weeks of city life as we had passed.

“We were warmly welcomed by Mrs. Madison and a niece, a young lady who was on a visit to her; and when I left my room I was conducted to the apartment of Mr. Madison. He had, the preceding season, suffered so severely from rheumatism, that during this winter he confined himself to one room; rising after breakfast before nine o’clock, and sitting in his easy-chair till ten at night.”

Miss Martineau was evidently prepared to see Madison’s faculties, mental as well as physical, on the decline; but on the contrary, she found him keen, alert, and responsive:—

“He appeared perfectly well during my visit, and was a wonderful man of eighty-three. He complained of one ear being deaf, and that his sight, which had never been perfect, prevented his



reading; so much so that his studies 'lay in a nutshell;' but he could hear Mrs. Madison read, and I did not perceive that he lost any part of the conversation. He was in his chair, with a pillow behind him, when I first saw him, his little person wrapped in a black silk gown; a warm gray and white cap upon his head, which his lady took care should always sit becomingly; and gray worsted gloves, his hands having been rheumatic.

"His voice was clear and strong, and his manner of speaking particularly lively, often playful. Except that the face was smaller, and of course older, the likeness to the common engraving of him was perfect. He seemed not to have lost any teeth, and the form of the face was therefore preserved without any striking marks of age. His relish for conversation could never have been keener. I was in perpetual fear of his being exhausted, and at the end of every few hours I left my seat by the arm of his chair and went to the sofa by Mrs. Madison on the other side of the room; but he was sure to follow and sit down between us; so that when I found the only effect of my moving was to deprive him of the comfort of his chair, I returned to my station and never left it but for food and sleep, glad enough to make the most of my means of intercourse with one whose political philosophy I deeply venerated."

Many were the themès touched upon by these two kindred minds, each stimulated

by the other to its best and clearest thinking. The host and his guest talked of the framing of the Constitution, of nullification, of colonization, and of slavery in all its phases. Madison showed himself not only open to conviction, but already fully convinced of the evils of slavery although he found it so intertwined with all the industries and institutions of his country that the disentanglement was well-nigh an impossibility. He spoke especially, and with deep feeling, of the difficulties entailed upon the mistress of the household, declaring that the saddest slavery of all was that of the conscientious southern women.

He spoke of the mistaken ideas prevailing abroad as to the sufferings of the negroes, and alluded to the surprise of some strangers who came to Montpelier under the impression that slaves were always ragged, frequently under the lash, and generally miserable. These visitors one Sunday morning saw the Montpelier negroes going to church, all in holiday attire, the women in bright-colored calicoes. When a sprinkling of rain came, up went a dozen umbrellas. At once the strangers veered about to the opinion that the lot of the slave was a particularly happy one, but Madison's candor again undeceived them.

It is an interesting picture that rises before

our vision as we fancy these talks and talkers at the old Virginia mansion in Madison's little "den": Harriet Martineau, with her ear-trumpet, brisk and trenchant; Madison, pale and reserved, shrinking within his black dressing-gown; Mrs. Madison, adjusting his cap to the becoming angle, and dividing her time between her chief guest and lively little Miss Jeffrey.

On the second day of her visit Miss Martineau was again surprised by an instance of Madison's energy: —

"The active old man, who declared himself crippled with rheumatism, had breakfasted, risen, and was dressed, before we sat down to breakfast. He talked a good deal about the American presidents, and some living politicians, for two hours, when his letters and newspapers were brought in. He asked me, smiling, if I thought it too vast and anti-republican a privilege for the ex-presidents to have their letters and newspapers free, considering that this was the only earthly thing they carried away from their office.

"The whole of this day was spent like the last, except that we went over the house looking at the busts and prints, which gave an English air to the dwelling which was otherwise wholly Virginian. During all our conversations one or another slave was perpetually coming to Mrs. Madison for the great bunch of keys; two or three more lounged

about in the house, leaning against the door-posts, or the corner of the sofa; and the attendance of others was no less indefatigable in my own apartment."

Miss Martineau's estimate of Mrs. Madison is of especial interest, coming as it does from one who was never accused of flattering, and whose pen, as poor Willis could bear witness, was capable of most uncompromising directness. Yet she, like the rest of the world, was conquered by the charm of this Virginia woman's personality. She says of her: "She is a strong-minded woman, fully capable of entering into her husband's occupations and cares, and there is little doubt that he owed much to her intellectual companionship, as well as to her ability in sustaining the outward dignity of his office. When I was her guest she was in excellent health and lively spirits, and I trust that though she has lost the great object of her life, she may yet find interests enough to occupy and cheer many years of an honored old age."

We gain through this last paragraph a sidelight on Mrs. Madison's power not only to reflect the character and interests of those who surrounded her, but also to put aside her own feelings, and even her own physical condition, to minister to the entertainment of

her guests. As a matter of fact, neither her health nor her spirits were so good as her visitor fancied. She was far from well, and her heart was still sore over the loss of her sister Anna, whose death she never ceased to mourn, as well as full of anxiety over the growing infirmities of her husband, who lived little more than a year after this visit.

As long as his health permitted, Madison no less than his wife enjoyed the stay of his guests, and it was partly for his diversion that she extended so many invitations to their friends. Montpellier had by this time come to be considered as the homestead, almost as much by Mrs. Madison's family as by that of her husband. From their early childhood the Cutts children looked upon the Orange County estate as a second home, where they too had a right to a pride in its possessions and associations, its miniatures and family portraits, its plate and its heavy, massive, old-time furniture. Here they spent many joyous days in their youth, and here they returned whenever circumstances permitted in after life.

When James Madison Cutts was married, in the year 1834, the wedding journey was made to Montpellier. As the coach drew up before the door, Mr. Madison came out, leaning on the arm of Paul Jennings, to greet the guests,

and though too feeble to join the family at dinner, he stood at the door which opened between the general dining-room and his own, and raising his glass, drank to the health of the bride, thinking the while perchance of that other bride whom he had brought to Montpellier forty years before.

## XIII

### LAST DAYS AT MONTPPELLIER

WITHIN ten years after their return to Montpelier from Washington, the shadows had begun to gather thicker and ever thicker about the path of Mrs. Madison and her husband. The lights were going out all around. Isolated as they were, they found it difficult to form new acquaintances, and the old friends one by one were passing away. On July fourth, 1826, Jefferson died. His loss to the Madisons was irreparable, as his friendship had been invaluable. Only a few months before his death Jefferson had written to Madison, begging him to have a care of the University of Virginia, and saying: "To myself you have been a pillar of support through life. Take care of me when dead, and be assured that I shall leave with you my last affections." His will reiterated the same expressions of affection and esteem, declaring: "I give to my old friend, James Madison of Montpelier, my



gold-mounted walking-staff of animal horn, as a token of the cordial and affectionate friendship which for nearly now an half century has united us in the same principles and pursuits of what we have deemed for the greatest good of our country."

To Mrs. Madison the loss of such a friend was almost as great a blow as it could be to her husband, and the sorrow was deepened by the breaking up of the family, which the entangled condition of Jefferson's estate necessitated. A few months after the great statesman's death, the furniture of his house was sold at auction. The "Madison" and "Correa" chambers were stripped of their hangings, and the very clock which for years had stood at the head of Jefferson's bed passed into the hands of strangers. A year later Monticello itself was sold, and all the old joyous days of visiting and merry-making between the Jefferson and Madison households were at an end.

Three years after the sale of Monticello the Madisons lost the companionship of another old and valued neighbor, James Monroe, who retired from the presidency a poor man, and at last found himself compelled to part with Oak Hill, his country-place, which lay in

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Loudoun County, Virginia, not very far from Montpellier. In 1831 he wrote a pathetic letter to Madison, dated from New York, April eleventh, in which he says that he finds the care of his estate so burdensome, and its loneliness so distressing, that he has decided to remove to New York to be near his daughter, Mrs. Gouverneur. He proposes to resign his seat in the Board of the University of Virginia, and predicts gloomily that he and Madison will never meet again. "I beg you," he says in closing, "to assure Mrs. Madison that I never can forget the friendly relation which has existed between her and my family. It often reminds me of incidents of the most interesting character."

To this Madison replied at once, and in his warmest manner, assuring him of the unchangeable regard of himself and Mrs. Madison, and urging him to retain, for the present at least, his position on the Board of the University. But three months later James Monroe died (on the fourth of July, like Adams and Jefferson), and so another homestead was deserted and another old friend was lost to James and Dolly Madison.

Death struck nearer home than the circle of friends during these years. In 1829, at the

age of ninety-seven, Mrs. Madison's mother-in-law passed away, and was carried to her long rest in the little burying-ground below the hill. In February, 1831, news reached Montpelier of the death of "Cousin Dolly" for whom Mrs. Madison was named; and on an August day in 1832 the beloved "sister-child," Anna Payne Cutts, died somewhat suddenly, after an illness in which a brief and deceptive improvement had led her family to believe that her life might be spared. It was indeed a deep and sore affliction, and one which aged and permanently saddened Mrs. Madison. It was perhaps well for her that her attention was so absorbed by her care of her husband that she could find little time for the indulgence of grief. Every day her company and assistance grew more essential to Madison's welfare. She became not only his nurse and companion, but his eyes and right hand. She was, indeed, as she described herself, the very shadow of her husband.

The summer of 1829 was marked by a cheering diversion in a visit paid by Mr. and Mrs. Madison to Richmond at the time of the Constitutional Convention, of which Madison was a member. From Governor Giles they received the following cordial invitation:—

## LAST DAYS AT MONTPELLIER

RICHMOND, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1829.

MR AND M<sup>rs</sup> MADISON: —

MY DEAR SIR AND MADAM, — Permit me to assure you I was very much gratified that your District had honored the state so far as to place you, Sir, in the Convention for altering or amending the Constitution. It is at the same time with sincere sorrow and concern I have learnt that the state of your health has, since that time, been [sic] impaired by indisposition ; but I earnestly hope that it is already completely restored, or will be, at least, so far improved as to enable you to take your seat in the Convention, and to afford that important service to the state which it justly anticipates from your weight of character, superior intelligence, and long experience in public affairs. I beg leave also, Sir and Madam, to assure you that I still recollect, with affectionate sensibilities, your kind attentions during a long personal acquaintance, and that it would now afford me great pleasure if yourselves and intimates would consent to become members of my family, and to accept a chamber in the government house during the session of the approaching Convention. That position would afford you some accommodations which it might be difficult to obtain in any house of public entertainment in the city. It is retired, near the Capitol, and would afford you opportunities of receiving visits from your numerous friends with more ease and convenience to yourselves than perhaps elsewhere. Permit me to press your acceptance of this invitation, and to assure you

*DOLLY MADISON*

in so doing you would afford the sincerest pleasure to myself, as well as to every member of my family.

Be pleased, Sir and Madam, to accept my respectful and friendly regards.

W<sup>m</sup> B. GILES.

[Addressed]

The Honorable

James Madison and Lady,  
Montpelier.

This visit to Richmond brought to Mrs. Madison several weeks of gayety and social enjoyment, such as she had scarcely known since her return to Virginia.

The twenty years of life at Montpellier after leaving Washington were no less busy for Madison than the years of official duties. "I have rarely," he wrote, "during the period of my public life found my time less at my disposal than since I took my leave of it; nor have I the consolation of finding that as my powers of application necessarily decline the demands on them proportionately decrease." His advice on political matters was constantly sought by men in every public office, and the heavy volumes filled with letters, pages in length, written in his fine, painstaking hand, show clearly enough how just was this complaint. His duties in connection with the university were specially onerous, because they

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took him from the home to which he clung more and more tenaciously as his health and strength failed. These trips to Charlottesville were often sources of anxiety to his wife as well, and a letter written by her on this occasion shows how tenderly she watched over and cared for her husband's health. As I unfolded its yellow page, and turned its faded ink to the light, I mused on the strange vicissitudes which had brought it under alien eyes.

Monday, — 9 O'Clock.

MY BELOVED, — I trust in God that you are well again, as your letters assure me you are. How bitterly I regret not going with you! Yours of "Friday midday" did not reach me till last evg. I felt so full of fear that you might relapse that I hastened to pack a few cloaths and give orders for the carriage to be ready and the post waited for. This mor'g, happily the messenger has returned with your letter of yesterday, which revives my heart and leads me to hope you will be up at home on Wednesday night with your own affectionate nurse. If business sh'd detain you longer — or you sh'd feel unwell again, let me come for you. Mama and all are well. I enclose you one letter. The only one rec'd by yesterday's post, with two latest papers, to read on your journey back. I hope you rec'd my last of Thursday containing letters and papers. My mind is so anxiously occupied about

*DOLLY MADISON*

you that I cannot write. May angels guard thee,  
my dear best friend!

D—.

Address,

To James Madison,  
University.

Tuesday mor'g.

The amount which Madison accomplished under all his physical limitations adds another to the instances which go to show how vast a proportion of the world's work is done by the physically weak. From the time of leaving college, when he believed himself doomed to an early grave, until the day when at eighty-five years of age he tranquilly closed his eyes forever upon earth, he never knew a year of robust vigor or abounding vitality; yet the body of his work is indeed a monument more enduring than brass. His longevity and his prolonged ability for work were in large measure due to the constant care given by his wife to all the conditions affecting his well-being, and to the unselfish devotion with which she sought to take upon her own shoulders the domestic and social cares which weighed more and more heavily upon his declining years.

The overseeing of an estate like Montpelier was in itself a life-business. The slaves, who numbered more than a hundred, were not



## *LAST DAYS AT MONTPELLIER*

intrusted to the unregulated brutality of an overseer, but were directed and disciplined by the master himself. He never struck a servant, nor allowed another to do it. So careful was he of their feelings that he took pains to administer even his reproofs in private, and with that habitual gentleness which led all who knew him to love him. As long as he was able to walk about he enjoyed the superintendence of the farm, the regulation of crops, and the cultivation of foreign trees and shrubs sent him from all parts of the world, some of which, like the Lebanon cedars, still stand as witnesses of his fostering care.

His chief recreation in the latter years was driving. He dearly loved horses. No man had a better eye for the points of a fine animal, and no jockey ever succeeded in cheating him. In the Washington stable there were always at least seven horses, and at Montpellier, of course, many more. On the Virginia plantation, at a distance of perhaps a hundred yards from the house, across the lawn in the rear, the stable built by Madison still raises its sharp gable from among thick-growing trees and shrubbery well planned to hide its less interesting features.

As rheumatism and old age grew more and more crippling, Madison gave up one out-

of-door pursuit after another, abandoning even his customary measured walk on the porch, and at length resigned himself with philosophy, if not with cheerfulness, to the monotonous routine of an invalid's life. His little room which opened out to the rear of the dining-room now bounded his world. It held a high-posted bed with crimson damask canopy brought from the Tuileries by Monroe, besides his desk, couch, chairs, and the table whereat he took his meals. When the door was open he could hear the cheerful echo of the talk at the dining-room table, and often called out jovial answers and questions, once bidding the doctor who sat at the foot of the table to do his duty under penalty of being cashiered. He loved a jest to the end. When some one urged him not to talk in his recumbent position, he answered, "Oh! I always talk more easily when I lie."

Sad as Mrs. Madison's heart was at the sight of her husband's increasing feebleness, she seconded his attempts at cheerfulness, drew company to the house as long as it amused him, and shut it out when he grew too weak to bear the confusion. For eight months she never went beyond the gates of Montpellier, and as the end drew near, in the month of June, 1836, she was seldom absent from the

sick-room for more than a few minutes at a time. Paul Jennings was her faithful assistant in her ministrations. He says in his *Reminiscences*:—

“I was always with Mr. Madison till he died, and shaved him every other day for sixteen years. For six months before his death he was unable to walk, and spent most of his time reclined on a couch; but his mind was bright, and with his numerous visitors he talked with as much animation and strength of voice as I ever heard him in his best days.

“I was absent when he died. That morning Sukey brought him his breakfast as usual. He could not swallow. His niece, Mrs. Willis, said, ‘What is the matter, Uncle James?’ ‘Nothing more than a change of *mind*, my dear.’ His head instantly dropped, and he ceased breathing as quietly as the snuff of a candle goes out.”

So died this great and good man, passing away with a jest and a kindly smile upon his gentle lips, as befitted the end of a simple, gentle life. The interment was in the little burying-ground where others of his family had been laid before him. The pall-bearers were neighboring planters, the Barbour brothers, Charles, Howard, and Reuben Conway. A sad procession of relatives, friends, and servants followed the body to the grave, wherein

James Madison was laid to rest, and then all was over. Another chapter in Dolly Madison's life was closed forever, and for the thirteen years that remained to her she went forward alone forever, missing that wise counsel and firm support which had so long been hers.

She met the blow bravely, as she faced every sorrow that came to her in life, determined that the gloom should overshadow as little as possible the lives of those around her. But the strain of her long months of anxious nursing was too great for her physical strength, and within a few months after Madison's death the inevitable re-action came, and her health failed utterly. The old trouble with her eyes increased to such an extent that she was compelled for weeks to keep her bed, with the curtains closely drawn to shut out every ray of light.

The sad days of sickness and sorrow in Mrs. Madison's early widowhood were comforted by letters of sympathy which poured in upon her from all parts of the country, letters so full of admiration and esteem for her dead husband that he seemed to live again in the heartfelt love and appreciation of his countrymen.

One of the earliest as well as the most important of these letters was written by

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Andrew Jackson, and accompanied by a copy of the resolutions drawn up in the Senate and House of Representatives in Washington, when the death of Madison was announced.

WASHINGTON, JULY, 9, 1836.

MADAM, — It appearing to have been the intention of Congress to make me the organ of assuring you of the profound respect entertained by both its branches for your person and character, and of their sincere condolence in the late afflicting dispensation of Providence, which has at once deprived you of a beloved companion, and your country of one of its most valued citizens, I perform that duty by transmitting the documents herewith enclosed.

No expression of my own sensibility at the loss sustained by yourself and the nation could add to the consolation to be derived from these high evidences of the public sympathy. Be assured, madam, that there is not one of your countrymen who feels more poignantly the blow which has fallen upon you, or who will cherish with a more enduring constancy the memory of the virtues, the services, and the purity of the illustrious man whose glorious and patriotic life has just been terminated by a tranquil death.

I have the honor to be, madam, your most obedient servant,

ANDREW JACKSON.

TO MRS. D. P. MADISON,  
Montpellier, Virginia.

The response of Mrs. Madison is marked by a fitness and dignity altogether admirable. It is dated Montpellier, August twentieth, 1836, and runs:—

I received, sir, in due time, your letter conveying to me the resolutions Congress were pleased to adopt on the occasion of the death of my beloved husband, — A communication made, the more grateful by the kind expression of your sympathy which it contained.

The high and just estimation of my husband by my countrymen and friends, and their generous participation in the sorrow occasioned by our irretrievable loss (expressed through their supreme authorities and otherwise) are the only solace of which my heart is susceptible on the departure of him who had never lost sight of that consistency, symmetry and beauty of character in all its parts, which secured to him the love and admiration of his country, and which must ever be the subject of peculiar and tender reverence to one whose happiness was derived from their daily and constant exercise.

The best return I can make for the sympathy of my country is to fulfil the sacred trust his confidence reposed in me, that of placing before it and the world what his pen prepared for their use, — a legacy the importance of which is deeply impressed on my mind.

With great respect,

D. P. MADISON.

To the President of the United States.



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The sacred trust herein referred to was the publication of that marvellous report of the proceedings of the Constitutional Convention, written out daily and with absolute accuracy of detail by the untiring hand of Madison, who had the foresight to realize how enormously valuable such records would be to the world in after times.

In his will, bearing date April fifteenth, 1835, the year before his death, he directs what use shall be made of this valuable manuscript. In the beginning he declares: "I give all my personal estate of every description, ornamental as well as useful, except as hereinafter otherwise given, to my dear wife; and I also give to her all my manuscript papers, having entire confidence in her discreet and proper use of them, but subject to the qualification in the succeeding clause."

After stating that he desires that his report of the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia, in 1787, be published, he continues: "It is my desire that the report as made by me should be published under her authority and direction; and as the publication thereof may yield a considerable amount beyond the necessary expenses thereof, I give the net proceeds thereof to my wife, charged with the following to be paid out of that fund only." The lega-



cies afterward mentioned amounted to about fifteen hundred dollars.

Mrs. Madison was eager to set about the task imposed upon her of superintending the publication of this manuscript, but her eyes for some time were too weak. At length, in the spring of 1837, by the earnest advice of her physician, she left Montpelier to seek the benefits of change of scene for her mind, and of the mountain air and healing waters at the White Sulphur Springs for her bodily ailments. The prescription proved so successful that she returned to her home at the end of August in greatly improved health, and with some restoration of her old cheerfulness.

Her brother at this time left Virginia for Kentucky, and Mrs. Madison, greatly depressed by the prospect of a solitary winter in the isolation of Montpelier, begged to have his daughter Anna left with her. The arrangement was finally made, and this beloved niece became her adopted daughter in fact, and later in name.

## XIV

### WASHINGTON ONCE MORE

LOVELY Lafayette Square, spoken of by Mrs. Madison as "President's Square," lies in the heart of historic Washington. Here once the apples from Davy Burns' orchard strewed the ground; here later generations of children played; here Downing planned vistas and planted trees, and here General Jackson in bronze still waves his hat to posterity from the back of that preposterous steed forever perilously poised in air on its hind feet. On the northeast corner of this little park stands a square, solid mansion now owned by the Cosmos Club, but always pointed out to strangers as "Dolly Madison's house." Within its walls she spent the last twelve years of her life, and there she died. Despite some alterations and restorations, it still remains substantially the same as in her lifetime.

It was built by Richard Cutts at about the time of Madison's presidency; and Mrs. Madison's much-loved sister Anna, with her

family, occupied it for many years. Mr. Cutts lost heavily during the war of 1812, and later became involved in unfortunate mining ventures, so that at last he was compelled to part with his house, and it came into the hands of Madison. It was to this house, therefore, rich in family associations, that Mrs. Madison came with her niece, Anna Payne, when Montpelier in its solitude became insupportable; and here, within sight of the White House, where she had spent such happy and brilliant days, she established once more her household gods.

The Washington to which she thus returned after twenty years was a different city from that which she had left. The houses had grown thicker along the thoroughfares; throngs of people walked the streets which had formerly been like country lanes. The White House had attained to the dignity of Brussels carpets in the drawing-rooms and silken curtains at the windows, French mirrors on the walls, and English chandeliers hanging from the ceiling. Yet, with all these advances, there was already a something lost, a delicate evasive flavor of aristocracy, a tone of deprecating refinement, a gentle, remonstrant, spiritual aloofness which held the crowd at bowing distance. All this was gone. The reign of triumphant democracy

was at hand. The curious crowds surged through the White House, and the custom of hand-shaking already threatened the nation's chief with a new terror.

One of the presidents (Mrs. Madison's warm friend and admirer, James K. Polk), reduced the matter of official hand-shaking to a science: "If a man," he said, "surrender his arm to be shaken by one horizontally, by another perpendicularly, and by another with a strong grip, he cannot fail to suffer severely from it; but if he will shake and not be shaken, grip and not be gripped, taking care always to squeeze the hand of his adversary as hard as the adversary squeezes his, he will suffer no inconvenience from it. Now," he added, "I can generally anticipate a strong grip from a strong man, and I then take advantage of him by being quicker than he, and seizing him by the tip of his fingers."

We can fancy that all this familiarity and lack of courtliness must have come with somewhat of a shock upon one who had presided over the more elegant society of the earlier time; but her tact as usual kept her silent where comment would have wounded, and she dropped at once into the new order of things, establishing a sort of court of her own, and recognized throughout the rest of her life as

a queen dowager. Once, indeed, at a ball she turned to her companion and said, "What a difference twenty years make in society! Here are young men and women not born when I left the capital, whose names are familiar, but whose faces are unknown to me."

Many strangers and foreigners came to Washington in these years, and all were brought to see the widow of the famous statesman, who now began to be known as "the venerable Mrs. Madison." The old-fashioned gown and turban, to which she clung in spite of the fickle changes of fashion, doubtless contributed to the impression of her advanced age, and she was associated with her husband's period by those who did not know the difference in their ages.

A certain air of vagueness always hung about her age, owing to the fact that she was understood to be somewhat sensitive in the matter, which was rarely mentioned even in her own family. In fact, it was generally considered in those days an incivility to keep too close an account of the advance of time, and although Mrs. Madison's birthday was always celebrated in the family circle, no comment was made upon the number of years it marked, till on one such occasion a little nephew rashly exclaimed, "Why, aunty, you are just the

same age to-day that you were on your last birthday!" The family were aghast, but Mrs. Madison patted him on the head with undisturbed tranquillity and smilingly responded, "So you remember, my little man!"

In spite of her efforts to seem and to look young, her age was generally exaggerated. Mrs. Maury, who saw her in her latter days, writes of her as bearing herself with regal grace, "still at the age of eighty-six eminently beautiful, with a complexion as fresh and fair and a skin as smooth as that of an English girl." Philip Hone, the New York merchant, makes a record in his journal for March, 1842, of a visit to Mrs. Webster's drawing-room and his subsequent call upon Mrs. Madison. "She is a *young* lady of fourscore years and upward," he says; "goes to parties and receives company like the Queen of this new world." At this time she could not have been over seventy-four.

Another visitor at Washington in this year was Charles Dickens, who recorded his impression of that city with the same genial courtesy which marks all his comments upon America. His description, however, is so vivid that it is worth noting as a picture of Mrs. Madison's surroundings as they struck alien eyes. He urges his English reader to take in imagina-

tion the worst parts of the City Road and Pentonville, —

“burn the whole down; build it up again in plaster; widen it a little; throw in part of St. John’s Wood, put green blinds outside all the private houses, with a red curtain and a white one in every window; plough up all the roads; plant a great deal of coarse turf in every place where it ought *not* to be; erect three handsome buildings in stone and marble anywhere; but the more entirely out of every-one’s way the better; call one the Post Office and one the Treasury; make it scorching hot in the morning and freezing cold in the afternoon with an occasional tornado of wind and dust; leave a brickfield without the bricks in all places where a street may naturally be expected — and that’s Washington.”

Crude and provincial as the national capital no doubt appeared to foreign eyes, to Dolly Madison, who had been shut up for a score of years to the seclusion of a Virginia plantation, it presented a bewildering scene of fashion and gayety, and as the period of her mourning wore away she began by degrees to take up her old life in the gay world.

Although the straitened condition of her finances hampered her in the exercise of her old-time hospitality, the sum of thirty thousand dollars paid to Mrs. Madison by Congress,



for the Reports of the Constitutional Convention, together with the amount left by her husband, would have enabled her to live with comfort, if not with elegance, in her new home, had it not been for the misconduct of her son. But what fortune ever sufficed for the demands of a gambler, a spendthrift, and debauchee! It soon became necessary to sell Montpelier to meet the debts incurred by Payne Todd; and his mother, though striving with pathetic self-sacrifice to keep a brave front to the world, was often reduced to the verge of actual necessity.

In these financial straits she wrote from Washington to her son, addressing him with unwonted formality as “My dear sir.”

“I beg, you will sign & return the enclosed as soon as possible, as I wish to return them to the Bank before the 7<sup>th</sup> I have hope & expectation of your writing me all about yourself, & my affairs. Will you tell me whether or not Mr Monchor [*sic*] will pay me the remnant due. I shall say nothing to him at this instant of the sufferings he now causes by his delay, but upon the rec<sup>t</sup> & contents, of an early letter from you, depends my taking the Boat, or going by way of Richmond to your house.

“But one short note from you since we parted — once I wrote to you — I send you papers.

“Farewell! *I’m not well* or should say more. Mr Simms has sent me a Bill for nearly 50 \$ — — Again — burn my letters of business.”

Paul Jennings, who had bought his freedom from Mrs. Madison, and was now living with Daniel Webster, often brought to his old mistress little gifts of the necessaries of life, and even market-baskets full of provisions, supplied by the thoughtful kindness of his new master. In her old age Dolly Madison became a sort of nation’s ward; and Congress, determined to protect her from the depredations of her undutiful and worthless son, made a second purchase, this time of Madison’s letters and other writings, for which it paid twenty thousand dollars, with the proviso that the funds be held in trust for Mrs. Madison, and named as trustees James Buchanan, John Y. Mason, and Richard Smith.

As though it could not do enough to show respect to the widow of James Madison, both on her own account and in memory of her venerated husband, Congress also voted her the franking privilege and a seat on the floor of the House whenever she chose to attend its sessions, an honor never before granted to a woman.

The presence of women in the galleries of the House of Representatives was a new sight

to Mrs. Madison, as in her day they had been excluded in accordance with English precedent. It is related that their admission dated from an evening when a lady meeting Fisher Ames at a party expressed her regret that she should not be able to hear the speech which he was to make. Ames replied that he knew of no law against her coming, and it was accordingly arranged that she should make up a party of ladies for the occasion. They came and were admitted, and ever after women continued to claim the privilege thus granted.

The little world of Washington society paid homage to Mrs. Madison as gladly as the representatives of the nation. On public holidays, such as the Fourth of July and New Year's Day, her doors stood open, and the throng of people who had paid their respects to the President at the White House trooped across the square to offer greetings to the "dowager." A young grand-niece who was present at one of the levees in the old corner house has recorded her childish impressions of the scene. She writes:—

"The earliest recollections I have of Aunt Madison are associated with a lovely day in May or June, when, arrayed in our best, my brother and I accompanied our mother across the ragged little square opposite the White House. We were

ushered in by Ralph, the young negro, who had succeeded Paul, so well known as Mr. Madison's body-servant in old times. We were announced as 'young Master and Miss.' My mother was 'Miss Ellen.' This was called Mrs. Madison's Levee-Day, and everybody came, much as they do now to make a short visit, gossip a little, then give place to new-comers. Aunt stood near the window. I was a curious little girl only eight or nine years of age, and my wide-open eyes saw a very sweet-looking lady, tall and very erect. She greeted us affectionately, and told us to go with Cousin Anna (Anna Payne), who would amuse the young people. I clung to my mother's hand and took observations after the manner of children in general.

"Aunt Madison wore a purple velvet dress, with plain straight skirt amply gathered to a tight waist, cut low and filled in with soft tulle. Her pretty white throat was encircled by a lace cravat, such as the old-fashioned gentlemen used to wear, tied twice around and fastened with an amethyst pin (which I remember, as Aunt afterwards gave my mother the earrings to correspond and I was sometimes allowed to wear them). Thrown lightly over the shoulders was a little lace shawl or cape as in her portrait. I thought her turban very wonderful, as I never saw any one else wear such a head-dress. It was made of some soft silky material and became her rarely.

"There were two little bunches of very black

curls on either side of the smooth white brow; her eyes were blue and laughed when she smiled and greeted the friends who seemed so glad to see her. I wondered at her smooth, soft skin, as I was told that she was over seventy, which at that time was a great age to me.

“A throng of people passed in and out, among them some old ladies, whom I have since heard of as the wives of men known to fame. There was Mrs. Decatur who at that time lived in a little cottage near Georgetown College, and never went out except to call on Aunt Madison. She wore a little close bonnet, and had great sad dark eyes. Mrs. Lear (Mrs. Tobias Lear whose husband was Washington’s secretary) was another most beautiful old lady whom we all called Aunt, I suppose because all the children loved her; Mr. Bancroft, who lived in the Ogle Tayloe house, next door; Mr. and Mrs. Webster, whom I saw for the first time; also Mrs. Polk, who was always so gracefully attentive to Mrs. Madison, and was then a tall, handsome, young-looking person and much beloved in society.

“This levee was over at four o’clock, when only we of the family remained with Aunt, who was still fresh and smiling. I have a very distinct consciousness in connection with this levee that she disliked nothing so much as loud talking and laughing.”

The dress of Mrs. Madison which her niece describes at her aunt’s levee, and which so

struck the youthful fancy, was the same in which she was painted by Wood in that portrait, the most familiar and the least pleasing of all that have come down to us, though the quaintness of attire and the delicacy of the hand do much to atone for the set smile, and stiff carriage of the head. A lady who knew Mrs. Madison in those days tells me that she said to her *a propos* of the yards of silk tulle which she wore about her neck, that she needed it to give softness to the face, and that after seventy the throat became a little "scraggy," and needed the veil of tulle or lace. So tenderly did time touch this lady of the old school that three score and ten years found her still beautiful.

"For her e'en Time grew debonair  
 He finding cheeks unclaimed of care  
 With late delaying roses there  
 And lingering dimples,  
 Had spared to touch the fair old face  
 And only kissed with Vauxhall grace  
 The soft white hand that stroked her lace  
 And smoothed her wimples."

In 1844 Mrs. Madison was one of the guests on the man-of-war Princeton at the time of the explosion of the famous great gun ironically known as "the Peacemaker," which might have proved fatal to her, as it did to the marines standing near, but for a fortunate

chance which detained the ladies in the cabin listening to the songs and merry-making of the young people. The calamity, with its attendant shocking sights and sounds, made so deep an impression upon Mrs. Madison that she could never after be induced to talk of it.

Meantime administration succeeded administration, and still Mrs. Madison remained, a prominent figure in official society, only the more honored by one president after another. At the inauguration ball of Polk a great crowd thronged the National Theatre in which it was held. In the midst of the rush and scramble Commodore Elliot fell victim to a pick-pocket and lost his wallet. Of all its contents he declared that what he most regretted was a letter from Mrs. Madison and a lock of her husband's hair. Old friendship was not weakened by the flight of time.

In the unpublished diary of President Polk we have an account of one of the last levees held during his administration, which is also closely associated with Mrs. Madison. The entry is dated Wednesday, February seventh, 1849:—

“General notice had been given in the City papers that the President's Mansion would be open for the reception of visitors this evening. All the parlours, including the East Room, were lighted up. The



Marine Band of Musicians occupied the outer Hall. Many hundreds of persons, ladies and gentlemen, attended. It was what would be called in the Society of Washington *a very fashionable levee*. Foreign Ministers, — their families and suites ; Judges, Members of both Houses of Congress, and many citizens and strangers were of the company present. I stood and shook hands with them for near three hours. Towards the close of the evening I passed through the crowded rooms with the venerable Mrs. Madison on my arm. It was near twelve o'clock when the company retired."

Six months later both the chief actors on this social scene were laid in their graves. This is the last glimpse we catch of Mrs. Madison at any public function, and most appropriately does it close. She entered Washington official society on the arm of Jefferson, and left it on the arm of Polk, her life, meanwhile, public and semi-public, having spanned nearly half a century, and covered the administrations of nine presidents.

## XV

### OLD AGE AND DEATH

AND where during all these varying experiences of Mrs. Madison's life, when she stood so much in need of counsel and support, was the son who should have rendered both? This was the question which all Mrs. Madison's friends asked, and none could answer. For his mother, her feelings had been long ago summed up in a last vain appeal to his better nature, when she wrote: "I have said in my late letters as well as in this all that I thought sufficient to influence you. I must now put my trust in God alone."

Payne Todd's life presents a melancholy picture of wasted opportunities, of grace and charm blurred and at last obliterated by gluttony and dissipation, of demonstrative affection transformed into filial indifference and ingratitude by long years of self-indulgence. Yet, while this undutiful son was doing all in his power to break his mother's heart, he per-

suaded himself that he loved her and intended to do much, but always in the future, to make her happy. When his debts had made necessary the sale of Montpellier and its slaves, he soothed his regrets by building on his estate nearby, known as "Toddsbirth," a strange conglomeration of cottages, one of which he intended for his mother's occupancy, and so arranged that by one of its long windows she could enter a great tower wherein he had planned a ball-room and state dining-apartment. Of course lack of funds prevented the completion of this eccentric home, as well as the carrying out of his scheme for a silk-farm, for which, after his usual unbusinesslike fashion, he had brought over from France a number of silk manufacturers before even planting mulberry-trees or hatching silk-worms.

His appetite he gratified as freely as his whims; and while Mrs. Madison and her devoted niece were struggling to secure the bare necessities of life, or dependent upon the bounty of comparative strangers, Payne Todd was in the habit of sending to Europe for rare cheeses and other table luxuries. As a result of his free indulgence, his face became bloated, and his figure shapeless, and so completely did his aspect change that few would have recog-

nized in his sodden features and heavy form the alert, graceful, laughing-eyed lad who had entered manhood as "the Prince" with brighter prospects than any youth in America.

Only once more does the shameful story of Payne Todd's misguided career touch the narrative of his mother's life. It came upon me with a shock of surprise, when among the papers of the Probate Court in Washington I found the record of the effort of John Payne Todd to break the will of his mother in order to secure the bequest which she had left to her "dear daughter," Anna Payne. Such meanness seemed impossible, even for Payne Todd. It is gratifying to learn that the jury declined to accept his view of the situation, and that he was obliged to content himself with the money realized from the sale of the household effects. He outlived his mother by two years, and then perished miserably of typhoid fever in a Washington hotel, no one save negroes near him, and with only one friend to follow him to his unmourned grave in the Congressional Cemetery.

A sadly forlorn life indeed would Dolly Madison have led in these latter days but for the affection of her nieces and nephews; but this surrounded her unfailingly to the last,

and the youthful companionship which they drew around her was the best solace for her increasing disposition to melancholy.

Anna Payne was full of mirth, and not too sedate for such school-girl pranks as inviting the President of the United States to dine on April-Fool's Day, and making merry over the discomfiture of her aunt and her guest when the jest was discovered. Mrs. Madison pardoned this escapade, as she found it easy to pardon many things to youth. She was indeed one in whom the spirit of youth was eternally asserting itself under all the aging experiences of life, and something within her drew all young folks very close to her heart. Of this chord of sympathy they were as sensible as she.

A few months before her death, Miss Dahlgren, the young sister of the admiral, at the conclusion of a call on Mrs. Madison, said to her: "I have a new autograph album, and I must have you write in it before any one else." Her cordial hostess, throwing her arms around her, answered, "Well, you darling little flatterer, if you will get me a good quill, I will do it. I cannot write with these new-fangled steel pens." The quill was found, and the desired autograph written.

For Miss Dahlgren.

"Deliberate on all things with thy friend;  
But since friends grow not thick on every bough,  
Think on thy friend, deliberate with thyself—  
Dance, ponder, sigh, not eager in the chase  
Nor jealous of the chase; fixing, fix  
Judge before friendship, then confide till death."  
D. P. Madison

Washington Feb'y 14. 1849.

The characteristic of this quotation contributed to Miss Dahlgren's album is the same which marked all of Mrs. Madison's utterances by tongue or pen, that propriety without originality which distinguished her and contributed so much to her success. Had she had more wit she had surely had more enemies; had she had less humor she would have won fewer friends; but the nice balance with which she held all things subject to good sense and good taste was her strongest claim to the esteem which she enjoyed.

It was no easy task in Mrs. Madison's day for folk of consequence to escape the intrusion of the autograph-hunter, and in Washington the evil reached its climax. Women waited outside the door of the Senate with open albums, ready to beset the first man who ventured out. Others besieged the court-rooms, and boldly sent up their little autograph volumes to the judges on the bench with an accompanying request for "just a line," until public men were forced to keep on hand a supply of appropriate sentiments or verses of gallantry to satisfy the collector's greed of their admirers. Doubtless, however, they, like President Monroe, found the flattery sufficiently sustaining to atone for the fatigue.

The Italian proverb declares a white wall



the fools' paradise, and it is no less true that an autograph album is the fools' pillory. In turning the rainbow-tinted leaves of our grandmothers' albums and Tokens of Friendship we are often tempted to smile over the sentimental sighings, and worst of all the facetious fatuity which have preserved the memory of the signers' silliness to the second and third generation; but Dolly Madison was by far too shrewd a woman to fall into such self-committing folly, and the various "elegant extracts," signed by her name, which exist in old autograph collections are invariably well found and neatly turned quotations, as in Mrs. J. J. Roosevelt's album, where she copied a sonnet to Lafayette with the accompanying reflection: "The memory of departed virtue is inscribed upon the soul like writing upon adamant."

As Mrs. Madison advanced in life, writing of any sort became increasingly difficult on account of her failing eyesight, and her niece added to her many other offices the duty of amanuensis. Her handwriting so closely resembled that of her famous aunt that a note from her satisfied both autograph hunters and acquaintances, thus relieving Mrs. Madison of a serious tax on her time and strength.

As her age advanced, even the social duties

of Washington life began to weigh heavily upon Mrs. Madison, yet to the end her house continued a centre of hospitality. Not very long before her death her younger nephew, Richard D. Cutts, Jr., was married in her drawing-room, and the wedding reception was one of the largest of the year at the capital. His bride was one of the namesakes of Martha Jefferson, and well-known in society; and the united acquaintance of the two families made a throng which taxed the Lafayette Square house to its utmost capacity.

All this hospitality was conducted out of pure good-will and in a sincere desire to contribute to the happiness of others. For herself, the pleasure in it was deadened by the graver experiences of life. "My dear," she said once to a young relative who was in affliction on account of some misadventure, "do not trouble about it; there is nothing in this world worth really caring for. Yes," she said once more, "believe me, I who have lived so long repeat to you, there is nothing in *this* world really worth caring for."

Her mind dwelt more and more in the happy days of the past, and from the troubles of the present she sought refuge in the consolations of religion. In this matter her peculiar temperament showed itself with great distinct-

ness. Her tendency to reflect the opinions of those whom she loved and respected was particularly marked in this direction. John Payne was a sturdy Friend, and his daughter hid her pretty face beneath the broad-brimmed Quaker bonnet, and murmured "thee" and "thou" as meekly as any "Deborah" in the City of Brotherly Love. John Todd continued in the Quaker traditions, and his wife knew no other opinions. James Madison, on the contrary, was a disciple of the Jeffersonian school of thought, considered in those days dangerously latitudinarian. The clergyman of the Church of England, who came often to visit his pious mother and administer the communion which her advanced age forbade her taking in church, found in Madison a courteous but non-committal listener; and a good bishop reluctantly records: "I was never at Mr. Madison's but once, and then the conversation took such a turn, though not designed on my part, as to call forth some expressions and arguments which left the impression on my mind that his creed was not strictly regulated by the Bible."

Yet here, as in every other department of life, Madison's course was marked by moderation, and his wife loyally followed his lead. Neither joined any communion, but both were

regular attendants at the quaint old brick church in the centre of Orange Court House four miles from Montpelier. After Madison's death, when his widow came back to Washington, she continued her regular attendance at the little church of St. John on Lafayette Square, and only a stone's throw from her house. Mr. Hawley, the rector, and an old friend, easily persuaded her of her ardent wish to become a communicant; and here she was accordingly baptized and confirmed by Bishop Whittingham of Maryland.

As the year 1849 drew on toward summer, it became evident to those around her that Mrs. Madison's life was drawing to a close, yet her mind remained clear till near the end, and even when her intellect failed her loving heart showed itself true to the last. Her "poor boy" was often in her thoughts, and her arms were stretched out affectionately to all who entered her sick room.

In July she began to realize that her days were numbered. Her will, dated July ninth, 1849, begins after the accepted form of the day:—

"In the name of God, Amen! I, Dolly P. Madison, widow of James Madison of Virginia, being of sound and disposing mind and memory, but feeble in body, having in view the uncertainty

of life and the rapid approach of death, do make, publish and declare the following to be my last will and testament."

The signature is a feeble trembling scrawl, sadly differing from the round clear hand of other days. The witnesses to the will were Sally B. L. Thomas, wife of Dr. Thomas, Elizabeth Lee, and James Madison Cutts. The will bequeathed "to my dear son, John Payne Todd, the sum of ten thousand dollars, one half the sum appropriated by the Congress of the United States for the purchase of my husband's papers." "To my adopted daughter, Annie Payne," the other half of this purchase money is bequeathed, and the remainder of the property, real and personal, is left to be distributed as the law directs.

When Payne Todd afterwards disputed this will in the effort to secure the amount of this bequest left to Anna Payne, then the wife of Dr. Causten, the value of the estate was brought out before the court. The amount in bank was sworn to as twenty-two thousand dollars; the household furniture and plate were estimated at nine hundred; the books at five hundred; the pictures and portraits, four of them painted by Gilbert Stuart, five thousand; and the negro slaves two thousand. The ground of the attack on the will is not men-

tioned in the records, but the question finally submitted to the jury was whether that will was "the true last will and testament of said Dolly P. Madison," and the verdict was "yes."

In the settlement of the estate the household furnishings were put up at public auction. Anna Payne was very anxious to secure the Stuart portrait of her aunt, and hearing that Mr. Corcoran intended securing it for his gallery, she went to him and begged him not to bid against her. Deeply touched, Mr. Corcoran declared that she should have it, and to her accordingly it fell.

The making of her will was almost the last act of Mrs. Madison's life. This was done on Monday, while she lay ill. On Tuesday the Washington bulletins announced that Mrs. Madison was better, and her nearest friends rejoiced in the hope of a rally, but it proved deceptive. While listening to a chapter from the Gospel of St. John she fell into a deep sleep, never to recover full consciousness. The physicians pronounced the attack apoplexy, and after two days she quietly breathed her last on Thursday evening, the twelfth of July, 1849.

In death as in life she held the interest not only of her immediate friends, but of the out-

side world, and it was decided to hold a public funeral on Monday the sixteenth, in old St. John's Church, whose tiny dome and picturesque steeple had been for years the most familiar objects to Dolly Madison's vision. Here within its cool, shadowy aisle, before the chancel, the coffin rested; and, in order to gratify the desires of the public, it was announced that the remains would be visible until the commencement of the ceremonies. When those were ended, the coffin was borne to the Congressional Cemetery, followed by a procession such as has seldom, if ever, done honor to the memory of any woman in this country. The order previously arranged was as follows:—

THE REVEREND CLERGY,  
ATTENDING PHYSICIANS,  
PALL BEARERS.

Hon. J. M. Clayton, Hon. W. M. Meredith, Mr. Gales, Mr. Ritchie, Gen. Jessup, Gen. Totten, Com. Morris, Com. Warrington, Gen. Henderson, Mr. Pleasanton, Gen. Walter Jones, Mr. Fendall.

THE FAMILY.

The President and Cabinet.

The Diplomatic Corps.



## DOLLY MADISON

Members of the Senate and House of Representatives  
at present in Washington, and their officers.

Judges of the Supreme Court and Courts of the  
District and their officers.

Officers of the Army and Navy.

Mayor and Corporation of Washington.

Citizens and Strangers.

Thus with much pomp and circumstance, with deep grief and true love, Dolly Madison's body was laid to rest in the Washington cemetery, but not to remain there forever. Some years later it was removed by Mr. Richard Cutts to the most fitting resting-place by the side of her husband, under the shadow of the beloved walls of Montpelier.

On a beautiful day of Indian summer I opened the gate of the Madison burying-ground, and passed between the low walls of crumbling moss-grown brick which hedge it in from the waste of meadow stretching away to the foot hills of that Blue Ridge which towers like some great guardian spirit above all the region. In one corner of the enclosure, side by side, I found two monuments, — one a simple granite shaft erected to the famous son of Virginia by his brethren of the Old Dominion, and marked simply "Madison;" the other a smaller obelisk of white marble standing out somewhat crudely

OLD AGE AND DEATH

against the mellow tones of the mottled brick.  
On this was carved:—

IN

M E M O R P

OF

DOLLEY PAYNE

WIFE OF

JAMES MADISON

BORN

MAY 20TH, 1768

DIED

JULY 8TH, 1849

As I noted the superfluous “e” in the name, and the wrong date set down as the day of her death, I wondered if these misstatements perpetuated in marble had power to disturb the tranquillity of her who slept below. But as I stooped and parted the periwinkle which runs riot above her grave, I seemed to hear once more Dolly Madison’s soft southern voice saying soothingly, “Nothing in *this* world is of much moment, my dear.”



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